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DOCUMENTS OF  
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT  
IN INDIA



# DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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# **List of Abbreviations Used**

<b>CI</b>	<b>: The Communist International</b>
<b>ECCI</b>	<b>: The Executive Committee of the Communist International</b>
<b>CPI</b>	<b>: Communist Party of India</b>
<b>LM</b>	<b>: The Labour Monthly published from London</b>
<b>CPGB</b>	<b>: Communist Party of Great Britain</b>
<b>CPC</b>	<b>: Communist Party of China</b>
<b>INPRECORR</b>	<b>: International Press Correspondence of the Communist International</b>
<b>BCI</b>	<b>: Bulletin of the Communist International</b>
<b>INC</b>	<b>: Indian National Congress</b>
<b>AITUC</b>	<b>: All India Trade Union Congress</b>
<b>AIWPP</b>	<b>: All India Workers' &amp; Peasants' Party</b>



# **The Communists' Contribution to the Theory and Practice of Indian Politics**

**E. M. S. Namboodiripad**

It was in the early 1920s that the national revolutionaries of India who had come into existence before the First World War were converted into Communists. They were influenced by two factors which inter-acted with each other :

Firstly, the experience of the struggle inside the National Movement, between the Moderate leaders and the Revolutionary ranks which came to the fore just before and during the First World War.

Secondly, the Russian Proletarian Revolution of November 1917 which inspired the Indian revolutionaries as did the revolutionaries all over the world. Many of the Indian revolutionaries made almost a pilgrimage to the land of the first proletarian revolution in the world. Those who did not undertake such a difficult venture formed small communist groups in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and the U.P.-Punjab region.

## **“C P I” formed in Tashkent**

The Indian emigrate revolutionaries who had gone to several European countries, to the United States, Canada etc. were also influenced by the Russian Revolution. Some of them took the initiative in the Soviet City of Tashkent in organising what was called the *Communist Party of India*. Although formed outside India, this new organisation did a lot of work to educate the young Indian communists at home. That organisation gave the first theoretical and practical education in Marxism-Leninism to the scattered groups of communists living and

working in their homeland. The Tashkent Committee may therefore be considered the original foundation of what subsequently became the *Communist Party of India*.

This however had a major drawback : although calling itself the *Communist Party of India*, it had its office outside the country. For this reason, a section of Indian communists did not consider the formation of the Tashkent group as the foundation of the *Communist Party of India*. They therefore decided to hold an open conference of Indian Communists in the City of Kanpur in U.P. ; a legally-working *Communist Party of India* was also formed in Kanpur. This, according to some, was the foundation of the real *Communist Party of India*, since it was formed and functioned inside the country.

Neither the Tashkent organisation nor its Kanpur successor however could work legally due to intense repression resorted to by the British Rulers. The leading comrades of the Kanpur *Communist Party of India*, together with a large number of communist fellow travellers, were involved in the Meerut Conspiracy Case which lasted from early 1929 to the end of 1934. Only after the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case were released could a formally-constituted, though illegally functioning, Central Committee and Polit Bureau of the *Communist Party of India* start working. The Tashkent Committee and the Kanpur Committee were thus the fore-runners of the continuing leadership of the *Communist Party of India*.

The work turned out by the Tashkent and the Kanpur Committees, as well as the countrywide organisation of the *Workers' and Peasants' Party of India* (a broader set up than the Kanpur-formed *Communist Party of India*), were thus the organisational foundation in the 1930s for the All India Centre of the Communist Party of India formed in 1934.

It is thus over six decades since the continuing leadership of the *Communist Party of India* has been functioning. During the fairly long period, the Party has made enormous strides. Today, though divided into the CPI(M), the CPI and various other political groups considered Marxist-Leninist, the Communists are a force to reckon with in Indian politics.

Three of the 25 States—Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura

are having governments led by the CPI(M), the CPI and other Marxist groups like the RSP and the Forward Bloc. At the Centre too, a Government is in existence in which the liberal bourgeois and Marxist-Leninist groups are co-operating with each other with a view to keep the two major bourgeois formations, the Congress (I) and the BJP, out of power.

Apart from the Centre, this combination is leading also the State Governments of Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka, Bihar, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir. Nine out of 25 States in India thus have governments in which Marxist-Leninists are participants'. The general political influence of Indian Communists over the Central and State administration is therefore unmistakable.

Although numerically the Marxist-Leninists are a small minority in the Indian political scene, its influence in Indian politics is far more than the electoral strength wielded by the Indian Marxist-Leninists. For, unlike other political groups, the Marxist-Leninists have made a distinct contribution to the theory and practice of Indian politics. It is attempted in this article to explain how this influence of Marxism-Leninism on the theory and practice of Indian politics has arisen.

### **The great heritage of early ideological work**

As early as in the beginning of the 1920s, the leaders of the Tashkent group which called itself the *Communist Party of India* made big contributions to the study of the economy, polity, philosophy, etc. of India. In a series of articles written in the periodical journals brought out by the Tashkent group, current major political developments were subjected to Marxist-Leninist analysis.

M. N. Roy, the former Indian national revolutionary who became a communist, wrote a series of articles in the journal of the Tashkent group, subjecting current political developments in India to Marxist-Leninist analysis. His contributions to the discussion of the communal problem and the analysis of the Mahatma Gandhi phenomenon were greatly rewarding to the Indian Communists.

His analysis of the communal riots that were breaking out

after the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat Movement constituted a great contribution to the study of a major socio-political problem. His analysis contained in the book *India in Transition* was, in fact, the first beginning of Marxist-Leninist analysis of the Economy, Polity and Ideology of India under British Rule.

Another foreign comrade who did the same work was Rajani Palme Dutt, the British Communist who wrote *Notes of the Month* which were a month-by-month analysis of international developments as well as national political developments in India. His book under the title *India Today* was a sister publication to Roy's *India in Transition*. The two together constituted text books applying Marxist-Leninist theory to the basic socio-economic, cultural and political problems of India.

Such ideological work carried out by Roy and Dutt together with the day-to-day political and organisational work turned out by the comrades in India, gave an ideological basis on which the finally-organised and centralised *Communist Party of India* with its Central Committee and Polit Bureau came into being.

This tradition of ideological work, applying the theory of Marxism-Leninism to Indian condition and enriching the theory of Marxism-Leninism with the experience of the political-organisational revolutionary work turned out by the Marxist-Leninists, was carried forward by Indian communists from 1934-35 (when a Central Committee and Polit Bureau came to be formed and were able to work continuously). This is the great heritage that we of the CPI(M), the CPI and other Marxist-Leninists proudly cherish and carry forward.

It is proposed in the following paragraphs to explain what are the major contributions made by the Indian communists in this long period, stretching from the formation of the Tashkent group which called itself the *Communist Party of India* down to the present times.

As early as in the beginning of the 1920s, M. N. Roy in his writings had drawn attention to the problems of communal riots, relating it to class struggle. He pointed out that the only antidote to communal division is class unity which means the



bringing together of the working people belonging to all castes and communities in the struggle against imperialism and the rich belonging to all castes and communities. This principle is even relevant today, more than seven decades after Roy wrote his articles. Class unity through struggles against the oppressing classes is the only solution to the communal problem.

As opposed to the Hindutva, Islamic Republic, Christian rule and so on, as well as to the rule of particular castes should be projected the democratic republic in which men and women born in every caste, believing in every religion and so on should be brought together in the struggle against the exploiting classes cutting across all caste and communal differences among the ruling classes.

This was the basis on which, two decades later, the communists joined other secular forces including the Congress in opposing the *two nation theory* of Mohammed Ali Jinnah on which the demand for Pakistan was propagated. The Congress however projected, the communists pointed out, their idea of a single nation/State of India ; they rejected the idea that India is inhabited by crores of people who are divided on the basis of language and culture and that the area inhabited by a single linguistic- cultural group is *a nationality within the greater unity of the Indian Nation*. We on our part pointed out that the *political unity of India* can be preserved only if the linguistic cultural groups inhabiting a particular State is considered *a distinct nationality within the indivisible Indian State*. It was in this sense that the communists in the 1940s called India a multi-national State. Multi-national India defined by the communists is, in other words, supplementary rather than contradictory to the unity of India as a nation.

That was why the Programme of the united Communist Party of India adopted in 1951 and the Programme of the CPI(M) and the CPI adopted in 1964 demanded maximum possible State autonomy for every cultural-linguistic group like the Malayalees, the Bengalis, the Tamils, the Andhras, the Kannadigas, the Punjabis etc.

This was the distinct contribution made by the Indian

communists to the nature and content of Indian politics. India's unbreakable unity can be safeguarded only if the multiplicity of linguistically-culturally defined States are considered distinct nationalities within the united Indian State. No other political party has been able to put forward such a clear idea. This therefore is a valuable contribution made by the Marxists-Leninists to the theory and practice of India's political thought.

### **Agrarian Revolution – Before and After Independence**

The first Programmatic statement of the illegal Communist Party of India issued in 1930 drew attention to the inter-relationship between the National Revolution and the Agrarian Revolution. Indian freedom can be won only through the revolutionary means in which the multi-million peasantry are drawn into a militant movement headed by the working class.

This was opposed to the ideas of the bourgeois leadership of the national movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, such as non-violence, the landlord-bourgeois classes being "trustees" of the people for their property etc. The Communist Party of India therefore was enjoined to carry on an ideological struggle against these Gandhian concepts, as well as socio-political struggles by way of organising the industrial and agricultural workers, working peasants and all other sections of the working people against bourgeois-landlord oppression. This was the dividing line between the bourgeois-sponsored right leadership of the Congress and the mass of Congressmen and women.

Within the Congress organisation, a clear left group emerged in the mid-1930s. Its struggle against the right leadership reached its climax in the election to the Congress Presidentship in 1939. The left candidate fighting that election, Subhas Chandra Bose, issued a statement in which he alleged that the right-wing leadership of the Congress was trying to enter into negotiations with the British Rulers on transfer of power to India. This, he said, is contrary to the national interests. What is required is mass national struggle against British Imperialism for which policy he was fighting the election.

The line advocated by the left candidate in the Congress Presidential election had the support of a majority of ordinary Congressmen. Bose therefore was elected President of the Congress. The bourgeois leadership however manoeuvred him out of the Congress Presidentship, going to the extent of personally expelling him from the Congress.

This was the background against which two forms of anti-imperialist struggle were organised in the 1940s - the Quit India struggle led by the Congress headed by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Army movement led by Subhash Chandra Bose. The former was apparently a militant struggle which drew millions of Indians into militant forms of action. The latter resulted in the formation of the Indian National Army headed by Subhash Chandra Bose which had an agreement with the military Rulers of Japan who extended support to the I. N. A.

The Communist Party of India could not support either of them because the Quit India struggle organised by the Congress leadership was the preparation for a move to put pressure on the British Rulers to open negotiations with the bourgeois leaders for transfer of power. As for the INA, the Communist Party of India considered that, despite the genuinely anti-imperialist sentiments of its leaders, it was a movement directed by the Japanese imperialist power which had its contradictions with the British Rulers.

The Communist Party of India therefore kept away from both the movements but, after the end of the war, it engaged itself in mighty militant mass struggles like the strike wave of the industrial workers and militant peasant movements like the Tebhaga movement in Bengal, the Punnapra Vayalar struggle in Travancore, the Telengana struggle in Hyderabad and peasant out-breaks in various parts of the country like the Telegu districts and Malabar in Madras, the district of Thane in Maharashtra, several districts in Punjab and so on. Together with the strike wave of industrial workers, middle class employees including government employees, students, youths, women etc, this was a mighty revolutionary upsurge in the post-war months. Despite its isolation from the anti-imperialist masses because of its

opposition to Quit India and INA movements therefore, the Communist Party of India came out as the leader of revolutionary movements in the post-war years.

However, the Communist Party of India was an extremely weak force in the anti-imperialist movement which by and large was led by the Congress. The latter therefore used the enormous prestige which it enjoyed thanks to its leadership of the Quit India and INA movements, to direct the immense mass upsurge as the basis on which negotiations could be opened between the Congress and the Government as well as between the Congress and the League. These 3 way-negotiations ultimately enabled the British rulers to put into practice the slogan given by the Muslim League to "divide and quit" India. The negotiations ended in the transfer of power to the Congress leaders in the Hindu-majority Indian Union and to the League leaders in the Muslim majority Pakistan. The militant mass actions, to some of which the Communist Party of India gave effective leadership like the Telengana struggle which lasted for 4 years and the Bombay revolt of the personnel of the Royal Indian Navy, were thus betrayed by the bourgeoisie because the proletariat and its party had not become powerful enough to develop the militant mass struggles into a revolutionary all-India upheaval.

### **Nationalism and Internationalism**

The Congress which led the Quit India struggle and the Subhash Chandra Bose leadership which gave leadership to the INA movement were two forms in which the bourgeois leadership tried to use the situation created by the Second World War for throwing the British out. The Congress leaders used the Quit India struggle to initiate negotiations with the British Rulers, while the Subhash Chandra Bose leadership depended upon the anti-British faction of imperialist powers for winning freedom. Both were sincere in their desire to win freedom for India—the Congress leadership through negotiations with the British Rulers and the Bose leadership through direct military and financial assistance from the fascist powers to throw the

British out of India. Both however were contrary to the interests of the Indian people who wanted to carry out an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal agrarian revolution. The CPI's opposition to the Quit India and INA movements therefore was, in the last analysis, correct. However, the CPI was a minor force in the political scenario, unable to meet the onslaught of Gandhian ideology in the Quit India movement and the left bourgeois, pro-fascist ideology of the INA movement.

The same difficulty had been faced during the years of the anti-fascist war by our comrades in several foreign countries, particularly in China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as well as Korea. They too had to face the ideological and political offensive of the bourgeoisie. But, unlike us in India, they were far stronger, far more powerful in their respective national movements. They could organise a wide national revolutionary movement which was anti-fascist as well as directed against the ruling imperialist power in their respective countries. They therefore could come out of the war period much stronger than we in India.

The Chinese comrades could throw the Kuomintang reactionaries out of power, making China a People's Democratic Republic. In Vietnam too, at the end of the war, half of the country was liberated where a People's Democratic Government headed by Ho Chi Minh was established. The same thing happened in Korea where the Communists could establish themselves as the ruling party in the northern part of the country, while the south remained under the leadership of the reactionary bourgeoisie. That was how the end of the anti-fascist war saw India divided on communal lines, while China, North Vietnam and North Korea had People's Democratic Revolutions.

China, Vietnam and Korea were thus examples of the successful carrying out of the programme of anti-imperialist agrarian revolution, while in India the process of agrarian revolution was disrupted by the manoeuvres resorted to by the British Rulers, together with the two (the Congress and the League) wings of the Indian bourgeois leadership.

It however goes to the credit of the CPI that, during the two bourgeois-led movements of the Quit India and the INA, the Party could successfully steer clear of bourgeois ideologies and keep the flag of proletarian internationalism afloat. The Party stuck to the principle of proletarian internationalism, declaring that the anti-fascist war waged by the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam and Korea was as much a People's War for India as it was for those particular countries.

The CPI pointed out that active participation in the international People's War against Fascism and the organisation of the anti-imperialist agrarian revolution were the two factors that would liberate India from British rule. Braving against the attacks from the misguided national bourgeoisie, the party held aloft the flag of resistance to facism as an integral part of India's freedom struggle. That was why, after a short period of complete isolation from the anti-imperialist masses (1942-45), the Party could gather the patriotic forces and give effective militant leadership to the post-war revolutionary upsurge of 1946-47.

However, because of the organisational weakness of the CPI, the Congress and the League leadership could come to a negotiated settlement with the British Rulers for transfer of power to the Congress in the Indian Union and to the Muslim League in Pakistan. But the very role played by the CPI in leading the post-war revolutionary upsurge made the party a significant force in Indian politics.

The result was that, in the first general elections which took place in 1952, the party came out as the major party of opposition both in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The roles played by A.K.G. in the Lok Sabha and Sundarayya in the Rajya Sabha, together with the work of the Communist and allied groups in Travancore-Cochin, Madras, Hyderabad, West Bengal and Tripura enabled the Party to become a force to reckon within Indian politics, although, in electoral terms on the national scale it was a small minority.

Mention may, in this context, be made also to the role played

by the then left in the united CPI on the question of India-China dispute in 1959-1962. As in the days of the Quit India and INA movements, in the days of the India-China dispute too, the CPI as a whole, particularly the left in the CPI, was relatively isolated among the anti-imperialist masses. The stand adopted by the left in the CPI however made it clear that, as opposed to the line of war with China adopted by all the bourgeois parties and the right wing in the CPI, the left in the CPI advocated peaceful negotiations for settlement of the India-China dispute which was proved correct in subsequent years when the Government of India itself had practically to admit that it was foolish on its part to have gone to war with China on the border question. Not only the then right in the CPI but even such parties as the Congress and the subsequent BJP had to admit that the border dispute between India and China has to be settled through negotiations with China and not through war.

The three decades that elapsed since the beginning of the organised work of the CPI's leadership in 1934 to the split of the party in 1964 was thus the period in which the united CPI made big advances but during which serious differences arose within the CPI—between the right and the left wings in the Party.

### **Right and “Left” Opportunism in the Pre-split CPI**

Although it witnessed big advances made by the Party from 1934 to 1964, its leadership was a victim of right and “left” opportunism. In the 1942-1946 period, the Party leadership was the victim of right opportunism. This was corrected at the Second Congress of the Party held in 1948, but the leadership switched over from right to “left” opportunism.

The left opportunism which made its first appearance at the Second Congress of the Party, repeated itself in a new form at the 1950 May meeting of the Central Committee. Both however were corrected, after serious discussions with the leadership of the CPSU, at a Special Conference held in October 1951.

The common mistake of the right and “left” opportunism was the failure to realise that, if the programme of carrying out the anti-imperialist agrarian revolution is to be implemented, the

Party has to base itself on the militant struggles of the working people led by the working class, combined with the tactics of revolutionary use of elections and legislatures under the bourgeois constitution. Out of this common failure arose the two deviations of (a) the bourgeois right opportunism and (b) the petty bourgeois "left" opportunism. These were subjected to serious self-criticism which ended in the formulation of a new Party Programme and Statement of Policy.

The Programme stated that the immediate objective of the Communist Party of India is not the introduction of socialism in India which is impracticable since the objective conditions are lacking and the necessary subjective forces are not developed. The Programme however pointed out that the crisis of the system in the post independence period had brought to the fore-front the possibility of bringing about a people's democratic revolution out of which will arise a people's democratic State and Government. It was on this basis that a Programme of people's democracy was adopted at the Calcutta special conference of the party in October 1951.

Having thus spelt out the objective of the people's democratic revolution which was incorporated in the Party Programme, the Statement of Policy discussed the tactical line. Considering the current objective situation and the maturity of the development of the subjective forces, the Statement of Policy, adopted along with the Party Programme, made two points :

Firstly, post-independence India having established a bourgeois democratic system with its elected legislatures to which the executives are responsible, it is necessary for the Party to go into the electoral battle, secure as many electoral victories as possible since all electoral battles are the concrete manifestations of class struggle.

Secondly, struggle on the parliamentary arena is only an important aspect of the struggle for People's Democracy. As important as the struggle on the electoral arena is the struggles of the working people outside the parliamentary arena. Any neglect of the struggle on the parliamentary arena will no doubt amount to failure to use the immense possibilities of



gathering the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the working class.

There should however be no illusion, spread by the right wing Social Democrats, that merely through the struggles on the parliamentary arena, the struggle for people's democracy will end in success. On the other hand, the very use of bourgeois parliament for preparing people's democracy should be subordinated to the extra parliamentary struggle. Non-use of the revolutionary potentialities of the struggle on the parliamentary arena and subordinating the mass struggle to parliamentary work are the "left" and right forms of opportunism against which the Party should guard itself.

The Statement of Policy, adopted along with the Party Programme, had visualised a situation where the Party will have to adopt the tactics of waging peasant guerilla war as was done in Telengana. Actual experience however proved that, if the bourgeoisie resorted to the method of sabotage against People's Democracy, that situation has to be faced by mobilising more and more masses of working people led by the working class against the bourgeois-landlord Government.

That was why the Party did not have any hesitation to form its own government in Kerala in 1957 and use that opportunity to mobilise the people around the programme of agrarian reforms and other measures which would bring more and more people to the cause of People's Democracy.

The major contribution made by the pre-split CPI in the 1950s was the successful use of the parliamentary arena—membership of the two houses of parliament at the Centre and State legislature everywhere as well as the Kerala Government without slipping into the right opportunist "Parliamentarism" of the social democratic type.

The left-wing in the pre-split CPI which converted itself into the CPI(M) made a concrete analysis of the rise and overthrow of the Kerala Government on the basis of which the newly emerging CPI(M) wrote paragraph 112 in the 1964 Programme. While drawing attention to the possibilities of forming left-led governments in various States, that paragraph

warned against the illusion that the governments formed on that basis would be able to solve the basic problems either of the country as a whole or of the State concerned.

It was on the basis of this understanding, further strengthened by the formation of two left-led governments (Kerala and West Bengal) in 1967 that the CPI(M) formulated the idea that the left-led governments should be considered as “instruments of struggle for winning more and more popular masses, more and more political allies, to the cause of People’s Democracy”.

One consequence of this understanding of the relation between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles was the fact the CPI(M) came to the conclusion that, while it should take initiative to form and lead its own State Governments wherever possible, it would not join governments unless the Party is sure that it can influence the policies of the Governments.

That was why, in 1967, the non-left governments in Punjab, U.P. and Bihar were supported by the Party, though it did not join them. The same policy was adopted by the CPI(M) in relation to the Janata Government in 1977, the National Front Government in 1989 and, finally, the United Front Government in 1996.

### **In the Post-split CPI and the CPI(M)**

The Struggle between the right and the left in the pre-split CPI ultimately led to the 1964 split. This was based on 3 ideological-political issues and one organisational issue. The ideological political issues were :

(a) The attitude to the Congress and its Government : The right in the pre-split CPI and the post-split CPI looked upon the Congress as a “progressive national organisation” with which the Communists should collaborate. The CPI(M), on the other hand, stood for uncompromising struggle against the Congress, even though, from issue to issue, the Party was prepared to cooperate with the Congress. (At the Fourth Congress of the pre-split CPI, the right in the Party had called for such unity with the Congress as would eventually lead to the formation of a Congress-Communist coalition government.)

Defeated at that particular Party Congress, they did, after the split, implement the line in practice in Kerala and West Bengal: the CPI leader in Kerala (Achutha Menon) headed the anti CPI(M) Government of which the Home Minister was the notorious Karunakaran; in West Bengal too, the post-split CPI extended full cooperation to the semi-fascist terror regime of the early 1970s and subsequently to Indira Gandhi's Emergency regime.

(b) On the India-China border dispute, the post-split CPI extended full support to the campaign for the anti-China War. The CPI(M), on the other hand, fought for the Government of India entering into negotiations with China and settling the border question through talks. The post-split CPI joined not only the Congress but even the Jan Sangh in carrying on a chauvinistic campaign against the Chinese and against the so-called "pro-China" CPI(M). It was from this campaign that the bourgeois politicians and the bourgeois media took courage to characterise the CPI(M) as "pro-China" and the post-split CPI as "Pro-Russia".

(c) On question of ideological dispute between the Soviet Party on the one hand and Chinese Party on the other, the CPI fully sided with the Soviet position, while the CPI(M) opposed the Soviet line, even while entertaining reservations on some aspects of the Chinese line.

Together with these major ideological and political issues was the question of inner-party unity on which too pre-split CPI was sharply divided. The left in the pre-split CPI demanded that all ideological and political questions in dispute between the two sides should be discussed at a special party conference convened on the basis of party membership existing at the previous party Congress. This was not acceptable to the right in the pre-split CPI. Based on this accidental majority of members of the leading bodies of the pre-split CPI, they demanded that their political and organisational position should be accepted by the entire party. The accidental majority enjoyed by them in the leading bodies of the pre-split CPI emboldened them to start taking disciplinary actions against those who differed from

them. All the appeals made by the left in the pre-split CPI for finding democratic solutions to the political and organisational problems were rejected. The left in the pre-split CPI therefore were forced to organise themselves separately, forming a new separate party called the CPI(M).

The ideological, political and organisational struggle between the post-split CPI and the CPI(M) was thus a continuation of the struggle that went on in the pre-split CPI. Considering the fact that, on all the 3 issues on which the right and the left fought each other in the pre-split CPI—approach to the Congress and its Government, the India-China border dispute and the crisis in the international communist movement—subsequent history has proved that the post-split CPI had adopted a wrong line while the CPI (M) had a correct line. Any attempt at re-unification of the communist movement should therefore begin with a serious self-criticism on the part of the post-split CPI.

Before closing this subject, it is necessary to note that the CPI(M) had to fight and defeat the “left” and right opportunism which raised its head in the Party, as for example :

(a) There was a trend in the Party leadership in the 1970s that, in view of the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal and the Emergency regime at the national level, the Party should organise itself for a Telengana type struggle ;

(b) This found expression at the 10th Congress (Jalandhar) where a minority of delegates opposed the line of supporting the Janata Government ;

(c) There was a strong opposition at the Salkia Plenum for the proposition that the Party should develop itself as a “a mass revolutionary party of the working class”. The argument was that a *revolutionary party can never be a mass party*.

(d) When the Party decided to break with the Janata Government for its links with the RSS, there was opposition to it from a minority.

(e) On the eve of the formation of the United Front, a view was expressed in the PB and CC that we should join the government, even leading it.

It is thus obvious that the post-split CPI(M) has to fight and defeat the manifestations of "left" and "right" opportunism. The post-split CPI, Naxalites and other groups that consider themselves communist will therefore have to undertake a serious self-criticism of their ideology, politics and organisation.

### **Re-Unification of Ideology and Politics before Organisational Re-Unification**

Three decades after the formal coming into existence of a regularly functioning CPI, the party got divided into the CPI(M) and CPI; from within the CPI(M) itself, the Naxalites and other "Left Communists" also came into existence. Furthermore, certain other left parties like the Forward Bloc and the RSP are today in the field.

After a decade and a half of the separate existence of the CPI(M) and the CPI, they started working together in struggle against the Congress on the one hand and certain other bourgeois parties (including caste and communal parties) on the other. These united actions gradually developed into a more stable united front of left parties which allied itself with certain other secular democratic parties.

That was how the two Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura as well as the Left Democratic Front Government in Kerala have come into existence. The constituents of these left and democratic fronts have come together also at the national level to form the United Front Government.

This United Front Government at the Centre and the left coalition governments in the 3 States have raised the question whether the time has not come for all parties and organisations which consider themselves Marxist-Leninists to merge themselves in a single party. It was the CPI which raised this question first. But the sentiment has spread in other left parties as well.

The CPI(M) however considers it impractical and undesirable at present to have a single united Communist Party of India. The organisational coming together of various Marxist-Leninist

groups should in its view follow, not precede, the unification of an ideological and political character.

Unless the question of why the pre-split CPI was divided into the CPI(M) and the CPI and why other left groups calling themselves Marxist-Leninists have come into existence is addressed properly and answers given, it will be ridiculous to think of organisational unification of all existing Marxist-Leninist groups. That is why the CPI(M) suggests :

(a) Unity in action to develop the emerging unity of left, secular and democratic forces ;

(b) Continue with fraternal discussions of the ideological and political questions which divide various groups with a view to arriving at a common understanding on the international, national, political and organisational questions. As pointed out by Lenin, ideological and political unity is an essential pre-condition for organisational unity.

The emergence of a united movement of left, democratic, secular and federalist forces is a great achievement of the more than 7 decades of the existence of India's Marxist-Leninists. In the course of this work of 7 decades, while the Indian communists have made tremendous advances, they have also committed some serious mistakes. These should be subjected to serious self-criticism (by all Marxist-Leninist groups), with a view to consolidate the achievements and correct the mistakes. Only such a self-criticism, undertaken by all Marxist-Leninist groups, would prepare the ground for the organisational unification of all communist parties and groups into one single united Marxist-Leninist Party in India.

While the time has come for us to keep that objective, it is pre-mature to give the slogan of a merger of all Marxist-Leninist groups. The essential pre-condition for the subsequent re-unification or merger of all Marxist-Leninist groups is the development of the emerging unity in action among all left groups on the basis of a critical and self-critical analysis of the 7 decades of the development of India's Marxist-Leninist movement.

## Early Contacts of the Indian Revolutionaries with the Leaders of October Revolution

### A. INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES IN MOSCOW\*

On the eve of my departure from Tashkent, Abani Mukherjee arrived from Moscow. I had no news of his coming. He had no business there. I had sent him to the Baku Congress on the understanding that, on return to Moscow, he would leave for Western Europe to take up his headquarters in Holland with the object of establishing contact with India through the intermediacy of sailors. So his sudden arrival was not only a surprise, but it also turned out to be an embarrassment. He readily volunteered to take over charge of the Military School during my absence. He was also an ardent advocate of developing the Communist Party of India and increasing its membership. Because of his previous record with the Tcheka, Peter came to know of his arrival instantly. He had never got over the disappointment of having had to let him go out of his bloody clutches owing to my intervention, backed up by Lenin's benevolence. Given his ambitious and stormy character, Abani Mukherjee was sure to get into some trouble before long. Who would protect him this time against Peter's vengeance? Safarov disliked him heartily. Before leaving, I saw Peter to plead with him to be more lenient. He growled at me : Why did I bring Mukherjee here? He was sure to create trouble, and in that case Peter would take him without fail. The meaning of Peter taking anybody was quite un-equivocal. I was frightened and told him that Mukherjee had promised to behave properly and there were a dozen intelligent Indian revolutionaries who

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\* Taken from *Memoirs of M. N. Roy*, 1964 Publication, Pages 477-485

would keep a check on him. I was surprised that Mukherjee had left Moscow just before the Third World Congress, and that he willingly agreed to stay away. I came to know the reason as soon as I returned to Moscow.

When I reached there, several Indian revolutionaries had arrived from Berlin as representatives of the defunct Indian Revolutionary Committee. On my way to Moscow, I had pleaded with the leading Indian revolutionaries in Berlin to proceed to Russia, which at that time offered them the only safe asylum and promised to be a reliable base for work to promote revolution in India. At that time, they did not seem to believe that the Russian Revolution would last; and Communism did not find favour with them. So, when at last they changed their mind and turned towards the base of world revolution, I was naturally very glad. But to my great surprise, the few representatives of the Berlin Revolutionary Committee who had already reached Moscow were rather cool in their response to my friendly attitude. However, I learned from them that they had come only as a vanguard of the Revolutionary Committee, which would before long reach Moscow in full force. I hoped that on the arrival of veteran revolutionaries like Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendranath Dutta and others, the relation would change. I eagerly looked out for the arrival of men who with their revolutionary devotion and long experience could be expected to be good comrades and willing collaborators.

Within a short time, they all arrived to announce that the Indian Revolutionary Committee of Berlin, which alone had the authority to speak on behalf of India, had decided to shift its headquarters to Moscow, if favourable conditions were offered. Although the declaration insinuated that I had no right to speak on behalf of India, I made no secret that the plan of the Indian revolutionaries shifting their headquarters to Moscow would have my fullest support; and there could be no doubt that nowhere in the world could better conditions be obtained than in Moscow. Surprisingly enough; the newcomers not only tried to avoid me, but some of them actually took up an openly hostile attitude.



The Indian Revolutionary Committee of Berlin was then a thing of the past. Irrespective of whatever might have been its achievements in the earlier days, during the closing years of the war it was a divided house and had practically disintegrated. Instead of working on the authority of that legend, it would have been wiser to have made a new beginning under different circumstances. But it seems that the news of the formation of the emigrant Indian Communist Party at Tashkent had frightened the old nationalist revolutionaries, who regarded the new body as a challenge to their authority. If I had had the opportunity to meet the leaders of the delegation from Berlin, I could have explained the situation to their satisfaction. I did not approve of the formation of the emigrant Communist Party, and I did not believe that it had any right to speak on behalf of the workers of India, not to mention the Indian people as a whole.

The delegation of Indian revolutionaries from Berlin was composed of fourteen people, including Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendranath Dutta, Virendranath Das Gupta, the Maharashtrian Knankhoje, Gulam Ambia Khan Luhani, Nalini Gupta. The driving force of the delegation however was Agnes Smedley, an American by birth. I had met her in America. Then she was an anarchist-pacifist. Working as private Secretary of Lajpatrai for some time, she seemed to have developed a great sympathy for India. Having learned that famous Indian revolutionaries were living in Berlin, at the conclusion of the War she came over there and became a very active member of the Indian group.

But the delegation which came to Moscow was evidently not the original Indian Revolutionary Committee of Berlin. Hardayal and Chattopadhyaya had been the two dominant figures of the Berlin Committee and as such they had clashed before long. No less ardently anti-British, Hardayal however was taken prisoner in Germany and detained on the suspicion of enemy espionage. When Germany surrendered, he escaped to Stockholm and wrote a book describing his experiences in Germany. Evidently, the experience had embittered him. He appeared to be an apologist of the British rule in India and advocated

Dominion Status as against complete independence. He actually wrote something which, though true, ought not to be said by a revolutionary Indian nationalist. Pointing out the fact that the fighters for Indian freedom had learned their political lesson from Britain, Hardayal made the declaration that, if India was the mother, Britain was the grandmother. That naturally scandalised all Indian nationalists. It was alleged that he had written the book with the object of getting the permission to return to Britain and subsequently to India. But evidently he did not get the permission. He stayed on in Sweden and during the last years of his life taught Indian philosophy in the old University of Upsala. That was a recognition of his learning and intellectual calibre.

The chairman of the Berlin Committee, Mohammad Hasan Mansoor, had gone to Turkey in the earlier years of the War. He returned from there to Berlin disillusioned and disgruntled and declared himself to be a Communist. The professed conversion to communism isolated him from the old colleagues. He did not join them when they came to Moscow, but later on came there alone and lived quietly for a couple of years. I have already referred to my experience with him. When in 1919 I reached Berlin, Bhupendranath Dutta was the only original member of the war-time Indian Revolutionary Committee living there. All the others had dispersed. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya himself had gone to Stockholm to plead the case of India's independence in the International Socialist Conference there.

Feeling that the Indian revolutionaries from Berlin were not very kindly disposed towards me, I left them alone so as to obviate the impression that I was trying to influence them or to stand in the way of whatever plan they might have had. But I could not help being puzzled and pained when most of them would not even speak to me. It seemed they had the entirely groundless misgiving that I might stand in their way to seeing various Russian leaders and plead their case. Curiously enough, they were very eager to see Chicherin in the first place. He was still Commissar of Foreign Affairs, but

wielded no great political influence. Moreover, he had just received the British note about the activities of Indian revolutionaries in Central Asia and naturally did not think that it would be very wise to receive well-known Indian revolutionaries in Moscow. Nevertheless, as a polite man, not willing to offend anybody's feelings, he did have a short meeting with a few of the Indian revolutionaries. It seems the latter were disappointed with the meeting. Then they demanded an interview with Lenin himself. They made a great secret of the move, most probably believing that I might stand in their way. But I got the news from Lenin himself. He telephoned to me and asked me to come and see him. He enquired about the Indian revolutionaries who had come to Moscow, and if it was necessary for him to see them. If they had come to discuss any plan of revolutionary work in India, they should address themselves to the Communist International. Lenin was surprised to hear that the Indian revolutionaries were not at all well disposed towards me. Nevertheless, I suggested that he should see them and hear what they had to say. Lenin remarked that I was in a minority of one against fourteen. I replied that he knew that I did not claim to represent anybody but myself. So, as far as I was concerned, there was no conflict between the Indian revolutionaries and myself. Lenin enquired if I had discussed matters with them, and was surprised to hear that they would not even speak to me. Evidently in exasperation he sat back in his chair and said : "Well, select three of them to come and see me." I told him that I could not do that, he would have to contact them directly.

In the next days there was a great flutter in the Indian delegation. Lenin had agreed to grant an interview. The Indian revolutionaries had been informed that Lenin would receive three of their representatives chosen by themselves. There were differences as regards the choice. Everybody considered himself to be more entitled to the honour and privilege than the others. I could get all this information through Nalini Gupta, the only one who did not share the general hostile attitude towards me. He was also the only one among the Indian revolutionaries in

Europe who maintained some connection with the revolutionary organisations in India by frequently travelling back and forth secretly. He had met some of my friends in India and learned from them about the mission with which I had gone abroad in the beginning of the War. During his last visit to India shortly before he came to Moscow, he was instructed to contact me. So from the very beginning my relation with him was of mutual trust and confidence. He gave me the information that, although among the Indian revolutionaries there was a dispute about the selection of the three to see Lenin, there was a general agreement about the case which was to be presented on that occasion. A long thesis was being prepared under the guidance of Chattopadhyaya and Agnes Smedley to contradict my thesis adopted by the Second World Congress of the Communist International the year before. Luhani, a North-Bengal Muslim, who had come to Britain to study law, was a clever man and an accomplished speaker. But not being one of the senior members of the Berlin group, he was not chosen as one of the representatives to see Lenin. The thesis to be presented by the representatives, however, was drafted by him. The others could not prepare a well argued document.

Agnes Smedley, backed by Chattopadhyaya, wanted to be one of the representatives to see Lenin. Her claim was opposed by all the rest of the Indians. Finally, Chatto and Dutta, as the senior-most members, were chosen by general consent. I have forgotten who was the third one; most probably it was Knankhoje, who was chosen to obviate the allegation that the delegation was purely Bengali.

Having given them a polite and patient hearing, Lenin advised the representatives of the Indian revolutionaries to see the Secretary of the Communist International, and remarked that the Soviet Government could not actively take part in any plan for promoting revolution in other countries. The Indian revolutionary representatives returned from the coveted interview thoroughly disappointed and even angry. Dutta blurted out that Indian revolutionaries could expect no help from the Bolsheviks because they were eager to make peace with British Imperialism.

However, they saw Radek, who was then General Secretary of the Communist International. When they came to his office, I was in another room in the same building. In their presence Radek spoke to me on telephone. I begged to be excused with the remark that he would presently learn why I could not come. Lenin had passed on the thesis submitted by the Indian revolutionaries to Radek. He informed his visitors that in its activities to help the national movements in colonies, the Communist International was bound by the thesis of the Second World Congress. But, he added, if the new Indian comrades disagreed with that thesis and wanted the Communist International to alter its attitude and policy, they would have an opportunity in the near future, when the Third World Congress would meet; the Indian revolutionaries could stay on and attend the World Congress, not of course as delegates with votes, but as visitors. But if they submitted their thesis, the Secretariate of the Communist International would recommend its consideration by the World Congress.

The Indian revolutionaries were impatient. They would not waste time in Moscow. They were eager to return to active work which had been interrupted after the War. They had come to Moscow expecting to receive help so that they could go back to West Europe and resume revolutionary activities. Radek informed the Indian revolutionaries that the Second Congress of the Communist International had set up its Central Asiatic Bureau as the instrument to promote revolutionary activities in the countries of the East. Pending any new decision all plans of revolutionary activities in India should be prepared in consultation with the Central Asiatic Bureau of the Communist International. Radek informed the Indian revolutionaries that I was a member of that Bureau and had just come to Moscow. He advised them to get in touch with me and discuss their plans.

The meeting with Radek was even more disappointing than that with Lenin. In order to assuage the feelings of the Indian comrades Radek promised to ask the Executive Committee of the Communist International to set up a small commission to hear the case of the Indian delegation and to investigate the

whole situation. But that did not satisfy all, and soon thereafter, most of the members of the delegation left Moscow, one by one. Chattopadhyaya, Agnes Smedley, Bhupendranath Dutta, Luhani, Nalini Gupta and a few others stayed behind.

The Commission to hear the Indian revolutionaries and to examine the Indian situation was composed of August Thalheimer, the leader of the German Communist Party, Tom Quelch of the British Communist Party and Borodin. Chatto was the obvious leader of the Indian delegation. But he was a poor speaker, and Agnes Smedley was anxious to deputise for him. But a non-Indian would not be the right person to open the Indian case, which was done by Luhani. He gave a very good performance. After he had finished, Thalheimer enquired whether the new Indian comrades had any objection to work in co-operation with me. On enquiry, I frankly said that I would be only too glad to have the co-operation of the newcomers. I further added that I did not claim to represent India. If the new Indian comrades would agree on a programme of work, and decide to stay in Moscow to take over the responsibility of guiding activities, I should place myself at their disposal. That brought Chatto to his feet. With great indignation he interjected: "We have nothing against you, but we cannot have anything to do with you so long as you are associated with a known spy who has been responsible for the death of many revolutionaries in India." The Commission was taken aback. Borodin suggested that Comrade Chattopadhyaya should be a little more explicit about his allegation, if he wanted it to be taken seriously. In any case, who was the British spy he had just mentioned? Chatto signalled Luhani to answer the question. The accused was Abani Mukherjee, and the allegation was that, on his way back to India from Japan in 1916, he was arrested at Singapore and imprisoned. He did not escape from prison, as he had pretended, but was released by the British police because he had given out information about the underground revolutionary movement in India. On his information, a number of people were arrested in India and sentenced to death and long terms of imprisonment.

In reply, I informed the Commission under what circum-

stances I came to know Abani Mukherjee and said that his behaviour had also made me suspicious; but as long as there was no evidence to bear out the serious allegation against him, it would not be fair to penalise him, and the penalty would be the maximum, if I withdraw my protection. I would not take such a responsibility merely on vague suspicions.

In order to put an end to the unpleasant subject, which could not be settled there and then, Thalheimer suggested that we should revert to the discussion of any political differences the new Indian comrades might have had with me. On behalf of the delegation, Luhani replied that they disapproved of the formation of the Indian Communist Party in Tashkent and demanded its dissolution as the condition for any co-operation with me. I again explained the situation which was forced on me, and pleaded that the Communist Party of India was formed on the initiative of a number of others who would certainly not agree to the dissolution of the party, even if I recommended it. But the Indian delegation was equally adamant also on this question.

Chattopadhyaya, on behalf of the delegation, gave an ultimatum to the Commission. If their demands were not accepted, they would forthwith leave Moscow, fully convinced that Indian revolutionaries could not count on any help there.

## **B. THE EMIGRANT SECTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA AND THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL\***

The *muhajir* youths who, on Manabendranath Roy's inspiration, came to Moscow in different groups, entered the 'Communist University of the Toiling East' immediately on its foundation. The University was founded on April 21, 1921. Many of them joined the Communist Party of India after their arrival in Moscow. The emigrant section of the Communist Party of India was granted recognition by the Communist International in 1921. There are instances of Communist Parties, formed with a very few members,

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\* Excerpts from Muzaffar Ahmad's Memoirs : 'Myself and the Communist Party of India, Pages 57-70

becoming affiliated to the Communist International. The Communist Party of China held its first Congress with only twelve delegates, representing about fifty members. The delegate of the Communist International also was present at the Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, affiliated to it.

In the Communist Party in India, there were—perhaps there are still now—members who would not believe that the Party was founded abroad. How could they, therefore, reconcile themselves to the fact of its becoming affiliated to the Communist International. These members of the Communist Party of India were still under the spell of nationalism. It is true that Sripad Amrit Dange, one of the first batch of members to join the Party in the 1920's, accepted that the Party was founded abroad; but he too refused to acknowledge that the Party had been affiliated to the Communist International. He sent this opinion of his in writing to me after the publication of my book *The Communist Party of India and Its Formation Abroad*.

I am presenting here some facts and proofs regarding the affiliation of the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India to the Communist International in 1921.

## I

Some Indian nationalist revolutionaries, led by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, came from Western Europe to Moscow at the invitation of the Communist International. They were :

- (i) Virendranath Chattopadhyaya
- (ii) Bhupendranath Datta (not a Ph.D. yet)
- (iii) Birendranath Dasgupta
- (iv) Syed Abdul Wahid
- (v) Prof. Pandurang Sadashiva Khankhoje
- (vi) Herambalal Gupta
- (vii) Ghulam Ambiya Khan Luhani
- (viii) Agnes Smedley
- (xi) Nalini Gupta

During World War I all except the last-named three had



come to an understanding with imperialist Germany. It had been agreed that imperialist Germany would supply the Indian revolutionaries liberally with arms and money with the help of which the Indian revolutionaries would organize widespread uprisings in India. Imperialist Germany helped the Indian revolutionaries with money, but I do not know whether this help was liberal or not. However, it is a fact that Germany could not supply arms. The Indian revolutionaries were grateful to Germany for helping them with money. We learn from the autobiography of Raja Mahendra Pratap that the Indian revolutionaries received help from the German Government even after the fall of the Kaiser Government.

Anyway, the Indian revolutionaries, led by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, went to Moscow to negotiate with the Communist International. As a nationalist revolutionary, Chattopadhyaya was not in favour of a Communist Party being formed in India at that time. What is strange is that Chattopadhyaya himself was then a member of the Anarchist Party. Before a Commission, appointed by the Communist International, Chattopadhyaya proposed that a Revolutionary Board be set up to carry on work in India through its agency and that the Communist Party—if it is to be formed at all—be formed only after the British had been driven out. Chattopadhyaya was a well-educated, erudite person, but, it seems, he was a bad speaker. He, therefore, submitted what he had to say before the Commission through Ghulam Ambiya Khan Luhani, a finished speaker and a good writer.

It is with a view to making things clear for everybody that I have tried so long to give some preliminary facts. Now let me state my main point in the words of Dr Bhupendranath Datta :

“I want to state here that one morning some days ago it appeared suddenly in a Moscow newspaper that an Indian Communist Party had been formed and become affiliated to the Communist International. Who were the members of this Communist Party ? Roy with his wife, Mukhopadhyaya with

his wife, and the *muhajir* youths. Talking of this Party at a meeting even before the Second Commission had begun its sittings, Luhani said, 'It is a bogus party'. Again, while reading their thesis during the second sitting of the Commission, Luhani observed, '*Let the name of this party be struck off the rolls of the Third International*' and that help to the Indian revolutionary movement be given through their projected Revolutionary Board."\* (*italics mine*)

This extract proves that the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India became affiliated to the Communist International at that time. What should be noted here is that it was Ghulam Ambiya Khan Luhani who presented before a Commission, appointed by the Communist International, the demands of the nationalist revolutionaries who had come from Berlin.

There is no reference at all to dates in Dr Bhupendranath Datta's writings. However, it can be seen that Dr Datta and his friends came to Moscow early in 1921. I thank Prof. Khankhoje, for he has at least written that they were in Moscow for three months. Taking everything into account, we find that they left the Soviet Union even before the commencement of the Third Congress of the Communist International. The Third Congress started on June 22, 1921, and concluded on July 12, 1921.

Dr Datta further says that on the question of forming the Communist Party of India, he, Syed Abdul Wahid and Birendranath Dasgupta were not unanimous with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, the leader of their group. Dr Datta held that the right also to form a Communist Party was exclusively theirs, and they had already written to India in this matter. Who were these upstart *muhajir* youths to form the Communist Party of India abroad? But, even after a lot of investigations inside India, we have not been able to find out who were the persons to whom Dr Datta here wrote letters with the purpose of forming a Communist Party. About this, neither did he say anything to us nor did he write anything in his book. Dr Datta returned to India in 1925 and died in 1961: he had time enough.

Agnes Smedley was an American woman and a friend of India. She also held anarchist views. She married Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. It is not necessary to give any account of Nalini Gupta here. I shall discuss him in detail later.

## II

The emigrant section of the Indian Communist Party extended its activities to Germany, where the first organ of the Party was brought out on May 15, 1922. Its name was the *Vanguard of the Indian Independence*. Needless to say, this first fortnightly organ of our Party was published in English language. The paper was edited mainly by Manabendranath Roy and his first wife, Evelan Trent Roy sometimes contributed articles to Indian journals under the pen-name of Shanti Devi. Packets of the *Vanguard of the Indian Independence* were received at different addresses supplied by us, and we distributed them among different persons. We would also put copies of the paper into the letter-boxes at certain addresses in Calcutta. Further, only individual copies were sent to certain addresses. This was a comparatively safe method to ensure delivery. The paper did not bear the declaration that it was the organ of the Communist Party of India, a branch of the Communist International. When we realized that the police had become very much aware of the existence of the *Vanguard of the Indian Independence* and had also started seizing packets bearing certain addresses, I wrote to Manabendranath Roy, "Now it is time to change the name of the paper. It may make things a bit easier." I do not know whether anyone else from any other province made the same suggestion, but Roy wrote in reply that he would change the name of the paper. Thereafter, the paper was named the *Advance Guard*. The *Advance Guard* also did not carry any declaration that it was the organ of the Communist Party of India, a branch of the Communist International. But we found some time later that, like its predecessor, the *Advance Guard* also had roused the suspicion of the police. It was then decided to revive the former name of the paper, but it was discovered that Dr Datta and others, i.e. the nationalist revolutionaries

who had returned to Germany from Moscow had in the meantime taken possession of a half of the former name and had themselves brought out one named *Indian Independence* with Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarkar as editor.

The *Vanguard of the Indian Independence* and the *Advance Guard* between them covered a period of one year. The first issue of the second year appeared on May 15, 1923, as simply the *Vanguard*. There was no hide-and-seek affair this time. In clear language it was stated that the *Vanguard* was the organ of the Communist Party of India, a section of the Communist International. Lest anyone should entertain any doubt about this, I am reproducing here the block made from the photostat of the first issue of the second year (May 15, 1923) of the *Vanguard*. The message, sent by the Presidium of the Communist International to the *Vanguard* on its first anniversary, was also printed on the first page of the issue. Can there be any evidence more incontrovertible even than this?

I had not seen this issue or the subsequent issues of the *Vanguard* previously, for I was arrested and imprisoned on May 17, 1923. But Sripad Amrit Dange and Sachchidananda Vishnu Ghate were then free, and they saw and read this issue of the *Vanguard* of May 15, 1923, and the subsequent issues. Dange was not arrested before March, 1924. After Dange's arrest, i. e. from 1924, Ghate became active in the Party. Yet both supplied wrong information on the basis of which the Right Communists of India observed the fortieth anniversary of the Party in 1966. They have taken 1925—the year of the Kanpur Communist Conference—as the year of the foundation of the Party.

Although the *Vanguard* and other papers had from the beginning been printed in Germany, the names of different cities of India also appeared in the paper. The names of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras appear in the block printed here. There is no doubt that the name of Lahore was usually printed in the paper. As far as I can remember, the name of Kanpur also appeared some time or other. We had contacts more or less with all these cities.

### III

The historic Seventh Plenum of the Communist International was held in Moscow from November 22 to December 12, 1926. The stenographic report in Russian of this Plenum was published in two volumes in Russia. The report is entitled in Russian *Puti Mirovoi revoliutsii* (Paths of World Revolution). Drawing upon the account given on p. 8 of vol. I of *World Revolution*, Robert C. North and Xenia have written in the book, edited by them, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China: Communist-Kuomintang Split of 1927* :

"During the first session of the Seventh Plenum, November 22, 1926, Roy as the representative of the Communist Party of India had been elected to the Presidium of the Comintern and to the Chinese Commission." (p. 43)

It is written in quite clear language that it was as the representative of the Communist Party of India that Roy was elected to the Presidium of the Communist International and to the Chinese Commission. This Party was the Communist Party of India founded abroad. No application for affiliation of the Communist Party was sent from within India to the office of the Communist International in 1926.

### IV

On November 30, 1927, M. N. Roy wrote a long letter on behalf of the Communist International to the Central Committees of both the Communist Party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' Party. The letter became known in India as 'Assembly Letter'. It was stated in the letter that every Communist Party must become affiliated to the Communist International. But from India no application for affiliation to the Comintern was ever sent by the Communist Party. In fact, "Up till now Communist International has acted upon the affiliation of the Emigrant Section of the Communist Party of India."

It is now proved that the Communist Party of India was established on October 17, 1920, in the city of Tashkent, capital of the present Republic of Uzbekistan.

It is also proved beyond dispute that the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India was affiliated to the Communist International.

In his *Memoirs* M. N. Roy writes : "To challenge my representativeness was pointless. I did not claim to represent anybody but myself, and held my position in the International as an individual (p. 301)". The facts I have presented in the foregoing pages, the extracts I have reproduced from the book *M. N. Roy's Mission to China* and Roy's letter—all taken together—go to prove that Roy's pretension was entirely false. He had represented the Mexican Communist Party in the Second Congress of the Communist International. Thereafter, he had always represented the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. None but representatives of the Communist Parties of different countries could hold any office in the Communist International. M. N. Roy was elected to the Presidium of the Communist International as representative of the Communist Party of India in the same way as Stalin, Bukharin and Manuilsky were elected to the Presidium as representatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Even Lenin, had he been alive then, would have had to get elected in the same way.

### **Who are The Founder-members of the Party ?**

I hope that I have been able to clarify a number of points for future writers of the history of the Communist Party of India. Now that these points are clarified, those of us who are called the founder-members of the Communist Party of India can no longer find, I believe, much strength behind that claim of ours. The real founder-members of the Communist Party of India are those who joined the Party in Tashkent and Moscow in 1920-21. We can never forget the fact that the Communist International granted affiliation to the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India in 1921. Some of the members of the emigrant section of the Party went through great sufferings and hardships in order to return to India and, even after

undergoing imprisonment here, did not give up serving the Party. It was with us that they worked. We could have, if we wanted, regarded our Party as an affiliate of the Communist International, but the idea did not occur to us at that time.

Towards the close of 1921, we also began to move to some extent. We became quite active in 1922. Prison life also began for us in 1923. Everybody knows that prison life was inevitable for the revolutionary workers of India. But notwithstanding all this, can we claim to be the founder-members of the Communist Party of India? As for myself, I cannot find much conviction to make this claim ; we can, however, claim, that we only paved the way to the building of the Party.

### A few words about Muhammad Shafiq

I have already said that Muhammad Shafiq was elected the first Secretary of the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India and was—by virtue of his position—the first Secretary of the Communist Party of India, for no Communist Party had been formed in India in 1920-21. Everyone will naturally ask who this Muhammad Shafiq was. If I want to say anything about him, however insignificant, I shall have to depend on secret police reports and the reports of the proceedings at the court of law. I never knew Shafiq personally. My account, therefore, is based mainly on the material I have collected from police reports and court documents.

Muhammad Shafiq was a resident of Akora in the *tehsil* Nowshera of Peshawar. In 1919, he served as a clerk in the irrigation office at Peshawar. In his judgment, delivered on April 4, 1924, in the case against Shafiq, Mr George Connor, Sessions Judge of Peshawar, observed that during the anti-Rowlatt Act movement Shafiq went to Kabul in May, 1919, without giving any notice to his office. Again it was in May, 1919, that Afghanistan attacked British India ; and as a result of this war (the Third Afghan War) Afghanistan won the status of a fully independent state. Shafiq must have gone to Kabul as a *muhajir* (self-exiled), but it should be remembered that he did not belong to the *muhajirs* of 1920. The *Hijrat* (flight

from persecution) movement was yet to start when he left India. The *Hijrat* movement of 1920 originated from the Khilafat agitation and only the Muslims participated in it ; but the movement against the Rowlatt Act was a broad-based political one, cutting across the barriers of nationality and religion. The tragic incidents, which took place in Jalianwalla Bagh in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, arose from the anti-Rowlatt Act movement, which the British Government in India wanted to suppress ruthlessly.

In course of his judgment the Sessions Judge observed, "His intention in going there (Kabul) was soon made apparent for he at once got into touch with Bolshevik agents who were then at Kabul." If the Judge's observation is correct, then Shafiq, possibly, got into touch with the Bolsheviks before reaching Kabul.

On December 10, 1923—after his arrest—Shafiq made a statement before Khan Muhammad, Additional Magistrate of Peshawar. To make a statement like this before a Magistrate is a sign of great weakness; but Shafiq made it. A man making such a statement is never entirely truthful ; on the contrary, he fabricates a lot of things. Therefore, to get at the truth one has to read the statement between the lines. Shafiq says that it was in Kabul he met Raja Mahendra Pratap. Abdur Rab and Acharya : they had just returned from Russia. To the *muhajirs* who were in Kabul at the time, either Abdur Rab or both Rab and Acharya said that the Russian Government looked upon the Indian *muhajirs* with respect and also helped them. As soon as Shafiq heard this, he started for Russia via Mazar-i-Sharif. He was accompanied by Ahmad Hassan, and Abdul Majid and Muhammad Sadiq of Kohat. Ahmad Hassan was probably Muhammad Ali *alias* Khushi Muhammad. Shafiq's statement points to the existence of factionalism among the Indian *muhajirs* in Kabul. Shafiq belonged to Moulana Obeidullah Sindhi's group. At the time of his departure for Russia, he had seen Abdur Rab having a quarrel with Moulana Obeidullah over extremely petty personal interests. The subsequent activities of Abdur Rab



showed him to be a cantankerous and factious short of person. Shafiq and the others reached Tashkent safely. It seems that they reached Tashkent some time towards the end of 1919. As it was not possible to stay idle there, they brought out a paper named *Zamindar* in Urdu and Persian. In the Punjab and the North-Western Frontier Province *Zamindar* means 'peasant'. Only one issue of the paper came out. When making his statement before the Magistrate, Shafiq, probably, thought that the single issue of *Zamindar* had not certainly reached India. He, therefore, said that it was on the ideals of Islam that the paper had been based. The issue of *Zamindar* was not just another exhibit in the case ; it was exhibit No. 2. The judgment contained many extracts from the issue, but there was no evidence of anything Islamic in them. Shafiq, perhaps, spoke of the Islamic basis of the paper in order to minimize his offence. Some three months (three, according to Shafiq's estimate, which, however, does not tally with my calculation) after Shafiq's arrival in Tashkent, Abdur Rab and Prativadi Acharya came there with a party of thirty *muhajirs*. The mass *Hijrat* movement of 1920 had already started in India.

Some days later Shafiq received the invitation to attend the Second Congress of the Communist International, which was to be held from July 19 to August 7, 1920. With the purpose of minimizing his offence, Shafiq told the Judge that they had gone to Moscow under orders from the Soviet Government. Factionalism had already started in Tashkent also. Shafiq states, "Acharya went to Moscow for the Second Congress on behalf of the revolutionary committee of Abdur Rab, and I went on behalf of our group". The expression 'our group', perhaps, means the group opposed to Abdur Rab. It was in Moscow that Shafiq first made the acquaintance of Manabendranath Roy and Abani Mukherjee. Roy, Mukherjee and Acharya attended the Congress as delegates; Shafiq had an observer's ticket. It is difficult for me to say whether Shafiq was really an observer or told the story of the observer's ticket in order to minimize his offence.

However, Roy alone had the right both to participate in the deliberations and to vote. The other Indians could only participate in the deliberations.

One thing, however, strikes me as very strange. Why did Manabendranath make no reference to Prativadi Acharya and Shafiq in his *Memoirs*? How could Roy forget that both Prativadi Acharya and Muhammad Shafiq had attended the Second Congress of the Communist International? I cannot believe that any revolutionary could ever forget an incident like this in his career. Roy writes that it must have been a very strange thing that he should represent Mexico and Abani Mukherjee should represent India (although without the voting right) in the Second Congress of the Comintern. The names of Prativadi Acharya and Shafiq should have been specially mentioned; but Roy did not mention them.

When the question arose of sending back home the young Indian *muhajir* students of the Communist University of the Toiling East, attempts were made to procure by various means passport for them. Those who failed to procure passports for themselves reached India across the nearly impassable and insurmountable Panir and the Hindu Kush. From the documents of the Moscow Conspiracy Case in Peshawar it appears that Shafiq Muhammad was very lucky in the matter of passport. What we had so long referred to as the Peshawar Conspiracy Case (1922-23) is now found to have been described as the Moscow Conspiracy Case in the relevant records. With the help of a false British passport procured for him, Shafiq returned to India by sea from a certain port in Holland. Fida Ali Zahid, an approver in the Moscow Conspiracy Case, said that he had heard from the Russian instructor in the Military Academy that from Europe Shafiq went to Lahore but then for fear of being arrested he fled to Kabul in panic. Abdulla Qadir Sehrai (Khan) said that Shafiq had visited India secretly several times. He said further that with the help of a false British passport Shafiq had returned to India by sea from a port in Holland in November, 1921, but he had gone to Kabul, fearing arrest.

It seems that the latter is the correct information. In a letter sent from Kabul to M. N. Roy on August 29, 1922, there is a reference to one 'S'. This 'S' probably is Shafiq. The author of this letter said that 'S' was trying to deliver him up in the hands of A.G. (the Afghan Government). Was Muhammad Ali the author of the letter? If all this be true, then it must be admitted that Shafiq had degenerated.

What followed was that towards the end of 1922, when the Afghan Government asked the Indian revolutionaries to leave Afghanistan, Shafiq also had to leave with them. Many of the Indian revolutionaries went to Moscow, but Shafiq no longer had the face to go there. He went to Seestan, where he gave himself up to the British Consul, praying to be sent to India. I cannot understand why Shafiq went to Seestan to surrender. Seestan today is not a big province: a third of it is in Iran, the rest in Afghanistan. Shafiq, however, was arrested as soon as he reached the Indian border, and proceedings (the Second Communist Conspiracy Case) were started against him under sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. George Connor, Sessions Judge of Peshawar, sentenced Shafiq to three years' rigorous imprisonment on April 4, 1924.

I shall have to write about Muhammad Shafiq once again in connection with Shaukat Usmani.

### **C. EARLY CONTACTS OF THE INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES WITH THE LEADERS OF BOLSHIEVIK REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA\***

**1919**

**INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES IN RUSSIA:** The following report was sent out from the Wireless Station of Bolshevik Government in the beginning of December:

\* Excerpts from : "Communism in India : Unpublished Documents 1919-1924", Edited by : SUBODH ROY, Pages : 1-64 [The details given here are actual records of the Files of the Intelligence Bureau. Home (Political) Department, Government of India, compiled by Subodh Roy, from the Files maintained in the National Archives, New Delhi.]

"On November 25th Indian Delegation handed a memorandum to Sverdloff, President of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, in the name of the peoples of India. This memorandum gives an exposition of the long martyrdom of India under the yoke of England, which, although it has given itself the title of a democratic country, keeps a population of 325,000,000 of the inhabitants in slavery. The Russian Revolution produced an enormous psychological impression on the Indian people. In spite of England's efforts the principle of self-determination for the nations has penetrated into India, whose events have taken such a turn that the English Government was compelled on August 20th, 1917, to formulate in Parliament two principles of their Indian policy. Indian delegates wanted to explain the situation to the English public, but they could not obtain a permit to go to England. In the U.S.A. and in France, Indian delegates were imprisoned. They were driven out from Japan, Switzerland and Denmark under the pressure of the English diplomats.

"The memorandum further says that the liberty of the world will be in danger as long as the imperialists' and capitalists' power of England exists, which power is founded upon the slavery of a fifth part of the population of the globe. The memorandum ends with an expression of confidence that the days of England are numbered, that the Indians will rise and drive out the foreign domination, and that free Russia will stretch out a fraternal hand to them."

**BOLSHEVISM.** The following note on—by a military officer who has made a special study of Russia and the Russian situation will, I hope, interest the readers of this report. In this connection I may mention that the *Daily Mail* correspondent at Heisingfers telegraphed as follows to the *Daily Mail*, London on 18th January last :

"The Indian Centralisation Committee, which is now working at Petrograd under the Bolsheviks, is composed of the same members as the Berlin Indian Committee. It is stated by the Petrograd Journal *Krassanja Gazeta* in the special number devoted to British India and to formation of Indian centralisation

Committee at Petrograd, that a large number of Indian Bolshevik propagandist have already been sent to India and that the power of Universal Bolshevism will soon be made known to the British Empire."

NARENDRA BHATTACHARJYA : who under the name of C.A. Martin and M.N. Roy played a leading part in the German plots against India has been living in Mexico for some time and appears to be carrying on anti-British propaganda in Spanish. A letter recently intercepted in the American Censorship contained a pamphlet entitled *La Voz de la India* (The voice of India) which bore the name of M. N. Roy as publisher. The pamphlet contained the usual calumnies of British rule in India and criticised a pro-ally pamphlet called *El Despartar de la India* (The Awakening of India), also published in Mexico.

From another source it is reported that Bhattacharjya, H. L. Gupta and the other Indians in Mexico have formed a League of Friends of India with the object of obtaining support for the Indian revolutionary movement among the South American republics. They have also addressed a letter to the diplomatic representatives in Mexico of several countries asking them through their governments to present to the Peace Conference the petition of the League for the release of India from British domination.

#### BOLSHEVISM AND INDIA

A Bolshevik agent named Carl Sandberg who had come to the United States from Christinia, was recently arrested by the American authorities. A considerable quantity of Bolshevik propagandist literature was found in his possession, some of it relating to India. Among it was a copy of a book issued by the Bolshevik government entitled "*India for the Indians*", which consisted of a collection of extracts from Russian official documents relating to India. The following passages are taken from the introduction:

"In closing there will be pointed out the role which the Russian Revolution can on its part play for the Indian Revolution on the ground of mutual struggle with world

imperialism, which has assumed in England with regard to India such unusual forms of rapacious exploitation.

"For us Russians, who are ourselves threatened with the fatal danger of becoming a colony of Western Europe or may be of American or Japanese imperialism, it is very important to obtain in the face of the oppressed, and in many ways similar to us in India, a natural ally in India, a natural ally in the cause of the struggle with a mutual enemy.

"Then let this collection serve our Eastern friends for the present as a first modicum of all our sympathy to the much suffering Indian people, as a certain pledge that our revolutionary paths in the near future will joyfully meet not only on the ground of a struggle for mutual liberation from a foreign sovereignty but also on the broader basis of class struggle and social construction."

The book of course is in Russian and the translation of these passages was done in America. I take no responsibility for the grammar.

Several British and French subjects who have recently returned from Moscow state that there is an Indian Lawyer these (sic) named "Servadi" who is on intimate terms with Lenin and is running the India Department of the Bolshevik Ministry of propaganda. This obviously refers to Hassan Shahid Suhrawardy, a member of well-known Calcutta family, who obtained permission from the British Government to go to Russia from England in 1916. It is said that he has several Indian assistants working under him at Moscow but their names has not yet been ascertained.

#### BERLIN COMMITTEE

This is at present inactive and the German Government does not pay much attention to it. The German Foreign office continues to pay for the establishment of the Committee, and will pay 400 marks a month to every Indian Nationalist residing in Germany until peace is signed or free communication with India opened again.

#### RUSSIAN COMMITTEE IN MOSCOW

This, on the contrary, is showing much activity and is working to organise a new Russo-Indian Mission to Afghanistan.

It is reported—though it could not appear to be likely—Dr. Hafiz and Umrao Singh Majithia are in Moscow; in any event much mystery is made in Berlin as to the present whereabouts, which applies also to Sen (unidentified).

Das Gupta has recently received a letter from Dutt (Bhupendra Nath Dutt) informing him that the chief of the Moscow Committee has arrived in Switzerland.

All the members of this Committee are reported to have become Bolsheviks, and they all, on the suggestion of the Soviet Government, desire to turn their National Committee to Communism. Das Gupta is himself affected in this way. He states that the name of the Moscow chief has not been mentioned to him, but he has grounds for the belief that he is Umrao Singh Majithia.

#### INDIAN AGITATORS ABROAD

**BARKATULLAH :** According to a wireless telegram from Moscow Barkatullah had an interview with Lenin on 8th May.

**HARDAYAL :** It is considered by some well-informed Indians in London that Hardayal's sudden detestation of Germany and "fancy" for England is blind. They say that any one who knows his record before he became a politician knows that he was in effect a Bolshevik in the days when Bolshevism was not known. His pamphlet on the *Aryan Conquest of the Dravidians*, written about 12 years ago, is instanced as a proof of this. He may, it is said, easily enough dislike the late German Government and the Kaiser and his entourage on account of the way he himself was treated by the German Foreign office, but he has no reason to hate the German people. Nor does it follow that he should have come to like England, any more than Germany does, though the Soviet has overthrown Imperialism.

There are many who think that German penetration into India has in no sense been abandoned and "Hardayal is not

a fool". He is on the contrary remarkably clever. Being a Delhi man he is able to exercise power and influence equally between Hindu and Muhammadan students; and as an Indian Nationalist he does not owe allegiance to anyone—he would use Russia, or Germany, or England to gain his object. He is believed to be in close touch with Russian Bolshevism in Stockholm; he knows the channels of communication from England and may be expected to arrange to correspond with Russians from India if he should be allowed to return there.

#### **BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA**

In paragraph 4 of my Weekly Report dated 31st March, 1919 it was stated that an Indian (Hassan Shahid Suhrawardy) was running the India Department of the Bolshevik Ministry of Propaganda. This is a Department of the Bolshevik Foreign office and is said to include men and women of every race.

Further reports have been received to the effect that Turkistan has been chosen as the main base for oriental propaganda. A special mission is said to have been sent to Tashkent for this purpose. A former Russian Consular Officer in Persia, one Bravin has been put in charge of this mission, and has been given full powers, large sums of money, and much literature and pamphlets.

A report dated 19th April, 1919, stated that Bravin accompanied by another Bolshevik emissary named Batavin has gone from Tashkent to Bokhara intending to proceed into Afghanistan. A quantity of propaganda specially directed against the British rule in India, was reported in March this year to have been sent into the Pamirs with a view to its being smuggled eventually into India through Chinese territory.

#### **INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD**

**PROCLAMATION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF INDIA :** A lithographed circular letter has recently been found on the Frontier which purports to emanate from Provisional Government of India. It bears the signature of Obeidulla, Wazir and Zafar Hussain, Secretary to the Provisional Government



of India. Obeidulla is a Sikh convert to Islam and was the signatory of the "Silk letters." He is the "officiating Salar of Kabul" in the "Army of God."

Zaffar Hussian was one of the Lahore students who fled to the Frontier in February 1915. He is a "Lieutenant Colonel" in the "Army of God." A translation of the letter is printed below:

"You have read the news of the Provisional Government of India in the Rowlatt Sedition Committee Report. This Government has been instituted in order to establish a better government in place of the present treacherous, usurping and tyrant Government. Your Provisional Government has been continuously struggling for the last four years. As soon as you determined to refuse to accept the oppressive law, the Provisional Government, too, succeeded in obtaining help then and there.

The Provisional Government has entered into a compact with the invading forces. Hence you should not destroy your real interest by fighting against them, but kill the English in every possible way, don't help them with men and money, and continue to destroy rails and telegraph wires.

Earn peace at the hands of the attacking armies and obtain sanads of honour by supplying them with provisions.

The attacking army grants peace to every Indian irrespective of caste and creed. The life and honour of every Indian is safe. He who will stand against them will alone be killed or disgraced.

May God guide our brethren to tread on the right path."

*Sd/-* OBEIDULLA.

Wazir of the Provisional Government of India.

ZAFAR HUSSAIN

Secretary, Provisional Government of India.

Delhi.

**RUSSIAN COMMITTEE :** The India Committee in Moscow is busy in Russian Turkestan and Bokhara. It is said that there are about 60,000 Indians residing in Turkestan. A successful

Bolshevik propaganda is carried on there through the Indian Committee. Several Indians in Turkestan have already joined the Committee in addition to six Indians from Afghanistan and India who have arrived.

#### PROPAGANDA IN THE EAST

A report dated 15th April, 1919 stated that there were many indications that the Bolshevik authorities have a special organisation for the encouragement of revolutionary movements in the orient and that they are engaged in turning out propagandist literature in Indian and other Eastern languages. It added that there was little doubt that many of the Indian revolutionaries and anarchists who formerly composed the Indian Committee under the German Foreign office have now taken service in Moscow.

**A BOLSHEVIST MUHAMMADAN AGENT :** It is reported from Helsingfors on 5th April, 1919 that Muhammad Bak Hajilachet corresponds with Bombay and is engaged in Bolshevik propaganda among the Mussalman population of India.

**THE TRAINING OF AGITATORS :** A report received in London on 25th April, 1919 states that very many agitators have been prepared for service in the East. A large number of these are to try to reach Tashkent and Persia. It is reported that a branch of the "League of the Eastern Freedom" is already working in Tashkent. Natives are being trained as agitators. The "League of Eastern Freedom" has as its object the spread of Bolshevism among the people of Asia. With this end in view, special "Action Courses" have been arranged in Moscow in Mussulman Workman's Hall (Asadoulev's house, Bolshoi Tartarski Street), Lectures are delivered on :

- (1) Economics of the East, by Suetloff.
- (2) .....
- (3) India, by C. D. Mstislavsky.
- (4) Imperialism in the East, by V. Kriajin.
- (5) .....
- (6) Socialism in the East, by Troanovsky.
- (7) Revolution and the Mussalmans, by Cysouppoff.

- (8) .....  
 (9) .....  
 (10) .....

In addition to the above, periodical lectures on other subjects are delivered. The temporary bureau of the "League of the Eastern Freedom" is in Sivtsefvrajka Street, House 14.

## 1920

DEFENSIVE MEASURES PROPOSED AGAINST BOLSHEVISM.  
 APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL OFFICER IN EACH PROVINCE TO DEAL  
 WITH BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA

Telegram P. No. M.D.O—2616, dated 28th Nov. 1919.  
 From : General Malleson, Meshed.

To : The Chief of General Staff, Delhi.

*Priority* : The following is a report from a British news writer, regarding the Bolshevik Mission.

1. It is difficult to give the exact composition of Suric's party as all intercourse with it is jealously guarded but the following is approximately correct : Suric : Russian Jew (other informants say he is an educated Kalmuck Muhammadan). A Russian Colonel formerly in Kurshk as Captain; speaks Persian and acts as interpreter. Russian doctor, Russian Secretary, Russian lawyer, Young German, Three Austrians, Fourteen Cossack, Maulavi Abdur Rab (also known as Abdur Auf), probably an Indian; said to have been in Kabul two years ago and gone thence to Bokhara. An India Rajah (Mahendra Pratap, Brahmin); said to be a converted Muhammadan; eats with Russians. Another Indian said to be a Madras Hindu.

2.  
 3.  
 4.  
 5.

6. The news writer states that he is convinced that the object of Suric is to induce the Amir to renew the war with

India—and the arrival of Suric in Kabul will be followed speedily by a fresh outbreak of war.

Telegram P., Nos. 116—8. Dated the 28th January, 1920.

From—His Excellency the Viceroy

(Foreign and Political Department), Delhi.

To—His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, London.

ANTI-BOLSHEVIK MEASURES IN INDIA : Please refer to my telegram, Home Department, No. 1022, dated the 18th October, work has now been commenced by officers specially appointed for counter-propaganda, coordination of intelligence, both internal and external, and organisational measures to keep Bolshevist emissaries and propaganda out of India. Conflicting announcements in Reuter's Telegram, however, regarding policy about to be adopted by His Majesty's Government towards Bolsheviks hamper them considerably. Similar embarrassment is felt by us when defining our attitude towards Afghan relations with Bolsheviks and a clear statement from you of British policy towards them would be of great assistance to us.

#### NOTES IN THE FOREIGN AND POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

A meeting was held on the 27th January, 1920 to discuss certain matters in connection with the defensive measures against Bolshevik propaganda outlined in the Home Department Letter No. 2483 dated the 25th November, 1919.

#### PRESENT:

##### *Foreign Department :*

The Hon'ble Mr. Dabbs.

Lt. Col. O'Conner.

Mr. Cater.

##### *Home Department :*

The Hon'ble Mr. McPherson.

Lt. Col. Kaye.

Mr. Corbett.

##### *General Staff Branch :*

Lt. Col. Muspratt.

Maj. Lumby.

J. & P. (S.) 3716/20

The Secretary to the  
Government of India,  
Home Department.

India Office  
White Hall,  
London S. W.1.

*Confidential* 30th March, 1920

Dear Sir,

I forward, for information, a copy of the paper noted in the margin on the subject of Bolshevik propaganda.

Letter from the Director of  
Intelligence Office, dated  
27th March, 1920

Yours faithfully,  
Sd/- Illegible.

Secretary,  
Judicial & Public Department.

J. H. E.

The Director of Intelligence,  
Scotland House,  
London, S. W. 1.  
27th March, 1920.

Dear Mr. Hote,

Perhaps it may be moderately old news to you, but I nevertheless let you know that we now have it from an unimpeachable source that the Bolesheviki have stopped Indian propaganda. This [is] reported from a source favourable to them to be due to the raising of blockade. On the other hand *they intend, as we know, to keep it secret meanwhile in order to present it to England later as a great concession.*

Yours sincerely,  
Sd/- H. M. Miller.

As a precaution, the part I have underlined [Italicised] should be treated as confidential.

(Intld.) H. M.

INTERNAL.

PRO-BOLSHEVIK INDIANS : A youthful apostle of Bolshevism has recently come to notice in Bengal in the person of Durga Das Chatterji, a 4th year student of the Bangabasi College in Calcutta. This young man has been going about under the wing of the well-known Liyaqat Hussein addressing meetings. Several times he has alluded to Bolshevism

pointing out its advantages and asking his audience to accept it if Government failed to take immediate action in the matter of high prices and profiteering. England, he pointed out, in the present state of affairs, would never be able to save India. If the Bolsheviks attacked from within and without and the only course left for them was to accept Bolshevism which he recommended them to do. Durga Das is a well known protegee of the well known extremist Jitendra Lal Banerjee who sends him to meeting as his deputy when he cannot attend himself.

**M. C. RAJAGOPAL ACHARI :** A High Court Vakil of Madras, holding extreme views is reported to be an ardent pro-Bolshevist, his idea being to attain the revolution he desires to see by fostering labour unrest. In this programme he is said to be assisted by a certain Sukhini Narayan Iyer, a young barrister, now in Guntur, who recently returned from Ireland where he was associated with Sinn Feiners.

These individual are being watched by the Madras Police. The former is touring the districts.

Jethmal Parsanam (notorious Sindh agitator) recently made a speech on 'Socialism' at Karachi the whole trend of which, in the opinion of the reporting officer, was calculated to encourage industrial discontent, and dispose the audience favourably towards Bolshevism. Bolshevism, he said, was nothing else than hunger, seventy-five per cent of Indians were poor and must starve if the bureaucracy retained the reins of Government.

The notorious Dr. Choitram Gidvani supported him.

S. P. Dave is now reported to have arrived in Bombay, unnoticed two months ago. He is stated to be living at Bhavnagar, Kathiawar.

Chaman Lal (see list of Pro-Bolshevik Indians) has come into prominence this week.

He is reported to have allied himself with Miller, the ex-guard of the N. W. Railway (vide last week's report) who is now the head of a rapidly increasing Labour Association composed principally of railwaymen. To this

association he has been appointed Legal Adviser. Chaman Lal has also allied himself in Lahore to a certain Swami Wichara, Nand, described as lecturer of the Poona branch of the Indian Home Rule League. This Swami has recently established in Lahore a branch of the League with Gawardhan Das, noticed last week for his pro-Bolshevik utterances, as President. Swami Wichara Nand's scheme, it is said, is to obtain control over the labouring classes, form Unions, ally them when formed with trade unions of foreign countries and then to strike at imperialism. It is said that Chaman Lal has invited Swami Wichara Nand to Rawalpindi where it is proposed to start a branch of this League.

Bepin Chandra Pal has renewed his anti-capitalist campaign. On 6th March speaking at the Surma Valley Conference at Sylhet on the subject of the rise in the cost of living he explained how India was being exploited by the foreign capitalist. His speech throughout can only be described as thinly veiled Bolshevism.

No man, Pal holds, has a right to that which he does not produce with his own labour, be the product material or intellectual. The only hope in his opinion is to form an open alliance with British Labour, which looks upon capital as its natural enemy.

**KNOWN AND SUSPECTED BOLSHEVIK AGENTS :** A Durani Pathan was recently found at Amritsar Station talking Bolshevism and praising the Bolsheviks, representing that if they came to India all wealth would be divided and there would be no more poor. He gave his name as Sardar Gholam Haider Khan and said he was a horse dealer and going to Bareilly. It appears that there is a man of this name resident at Kohat. Enquiries are in progress.

**MUSLIM-BOLSHEVIK COMBINE :** Information has reached the Allahabad C.I.D. that at the recent Bombay Khilafat Conference, Maulavi Mohammad Fakir, an Allahabad delegate, suggested to the subjects committee that owing to the recent comparison made in the British Press between Lenin and

the prophet Muhammad, a resolution should be passed that it was not in the interests of Muhammadans to oppose Bolshevism in India or in any part of Asia. The resolution was disallowed but the information adds that most of the delegates present were in favour of using Bolshevism as a weapon against the British Government.

In conversation with an officer of the Government recently, Mushier Hossein Kidwai showed that he had a very high opinion of Bolshevik strength and spoke of their "Great Citizen Army." Bolshevik Russia, in his opinion is much more organic and therefore more powerful and dangerous than Imperial Russia.

**AN INDIAN COMMUNIST MANIFESTO :** In the issue of the Weekly Report of July 19th mention was made of a manifesto published in the *Glasgow Socialist*. A copy of this curious document has now been received. It is an appeal to the British to join hands with the coming proletarian revolution in India against both foreign imperialism and the sentimental nationalism which would create a bourgeois democracy of Indian exploiters. Omitting verbiage the appeal runs thus :—

The time has come for the Indian Revolutionists to make a statement of their principles in order to interest the European and American proletariat in the struggle of the Indian masses, which is rapidly becoming a fight for economic and social emancipation and the abolition of class rule. The appeal is made to the British proletariat because of their direct relation to revolutionary movements in countries dominated by British imperialism.

The nationalist movement in India has failed to appeal to the masses, because it strives for a bourgeoisie democracy and cannot say how the masses will be benefited by the independent national existence. The emancipation of the working class lies in the social revolution and the foundation of a Communist State. Therefore the growing spirit of rebellion in the masses must be organised on the basis of the class struggle in close cooperation with the world proletarian movement.

But, because British domination deprives Indians of the



elementary rights indispensable for the organisation of such a struggle, the revolutionary movement must emphasize in its programme the political liberation of the country. This does not make its final goal— a bourgeois democracy unless the native privileged class could rule and exploit the native workers in place of British Bureaucrats and Capitalist. All that the world is allowed to know of the Indian revolutionary movement is the agitation for political autonomy. This had naturally failed to enlist the sympathy of the working class in any country, which must always be indifferent to purely nationalist aspirations.

The idea of class conscious rebellion against capitalist exploitation has been gaining ground in India, immensely stimulated by the war. The quickened industrial life, the rise in the cost of living, the employment of Indian troops overseas and the echoes of the Russian revolution, have fanned the discontent always existing in the masses. The nationalist revolutionary movement, recruited from educated youth of the middle class, tried to turn the discontent to an armed uprising against foreign rule. Since the beginning of the present century, terrorism, local insurrections, conspiracies and attempts at revolt have become more and more frequent until at least practically the whole country came under martial law. These activities did not inspire the masses with lasting enthusiasm; the leaders failed to prescribe remedies for the social and economic evils from which the workers suffer. By dynamic economic forces, which are destined to cause a proletarian revolt in every country, have grown acute in India and hence the spirit of rebellion has grown more and more manifest among the people who are not moved by the nationalist doctrines presented by the revolutionaries. To-day there are two tendencies in the Indian movement, distinct in principles and aims. The Nationalists advocated an autonomous India and incite the masses to overthrow the foreign exploiter upon vague democratic programme or no programme at all. The real revolutionary movement stands for the economic emancipation of the workers and rests in the growing strength of

a class conscious industrial proletariat and landless peasantry. This latter movement is too big for the bourgeois leaders and can only be satisfied with the Social Revolution. This manifesto is issued for those who fill the ranks of the second movement. We want the world to know that nationalism is confined to the bourgeois, but the masses are awakening to the call of the Social Revolution.

The growth of class consciousness in the Indian proletariat was unknown to the outer world until last year, when one of the most powerful and best organised strikes in history was declared by the Indian revolutionaries. Though the Nationalists used it as a weapon against political oppression, it was really the spontaneous rebellion of the proletariat against unbearable economic exploitation. As the workers of the cotton mills owned by the native capitalists were the first to walk out it cannot be maintained that the strike was nothing more than a nationalist demonstration.

It is known in England how this revolt of the famished workers was crushed by British imperialism. But the British working class were misled into believing that it was merely a nationalist demonstration and therefore abstained from taking definite action according to the principles of class solidarity. A simultaneous general strike would have dealt a vital blow to imperialistic capitalism at home and abroad, but the British proletariat failed to rise to the occasion.

The only step taken was very weak and of a petty bourgeois nature—the protest against the manner of crushing the revolt signed by William Lansbury and Thomas. This was not the voice of the revolutionary proletariat raised to defend the class interest.

The bourgeois nationalist movement cannot be significant to the world proletarian struggle or to the British working class, which is learning the worthlessness of mere political independence and sham representative government under capitalism. But the Indian proletarian movement is of vital interest. The tremendous strength which imperialistic capitalism derives from extensive colonial possession rich in natural

resources and cheap human labour must no longer be ignored. So long as India and other subject countries remain helpless victim of capitalist exploitation and the British Capitalist is sure of his absolute mastery over millions and millions of human beasts of burden, he will be able to concede the demands of British Trade Unionists and delay the proletarian revolution which will overthrow him. In order to destroy it completely, world capitalism must be attacked simultaneously on every front. the British proletariat cannot march towards final victory unless he takes his comrades in the colonies along with him to fight the common enemy.

The loss of the colonies might alarm orthodox trade union psychology with the threat of unemployment, by a class conscious revolutionary proletariat, aiming at the total destruction of capitalist ownership and the establishment of a Communist State cannot but welcome such a collapse of the present system since it would lead to the economic bankruptcy of capitalism-a condition necessary for its final overthrow.

To all possible misgivings of British Comrades we declare that our aim is to prevent the establishment of a bourgeois nationalist government which would be another bulwark of capitalism. We wish to organize the growing rebelliousness of the Indian masses on the principles of class struggle, so that when the revolution comes it will be a social revolution. The idea of the proletarian revolution distinct from nationalism has come to India and is showing itself in unprecedented strikes. It is primitive and not clearly class conscious so that it sometimes is the victim of nationalist ideas. But those of the vanguards see the goal and the struggle and reject the idea of uniting the whole country under nationalism for the sole purpose of expelling the foreigner, because they realize that the native princes, landlords, factory owners, moneylenders, who would control the Government, would be not less oppressive than the foreigner. 'Land to the tiller' will be our most powerful slogan, because India is an agricultural country and the majority of the population belongs

to the landless peasantry. Our programme also calls for the organization of the Indian proletariat on the basis of the class struggle for the foundation of a Communist State, based during the transition period on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We call upon the workers of all countries especially Great Britain to help us to realize our programme. The proletarian struggle in India as well as in other dependencies of Great Britain should be considered as vital factors in the International Proletarian Movement. Self-determination for India merely encourages the idea of bourgeois nationalism. Denounce the masked imperialists who claim it and who disgrace your name (of British workers). The fact that India is ruled by the mightiest imperialism known to history makes any kind of revolutionary organization among the working class almost impossible. The first step towards the social revolution must be to create a situation favourable for organizing the masses for final struggle. Such a situation can be created only by the overthrow or at least the weakening of the foreign imperialism which maintains itself by military power.

"Cease to fall victims to the imperialist cry that the masses of the East are backward races and must go through the hell fires of a capitalists exploitation from which you are struggling to escape"—"we appeal to you to recognize the Indian revolutionary movement as a vital part of the world proletarian struggle against capitalism. Help us to raise the banner of social revolution in India and to free ourselves from Capitalistic Imperialism that we may help you in final struggle for the realization of the universal Communist State."

Sd/- Manabendra Nath Roy  
Abani Mukherji  
Santi Devi

This appeal, with its orthodox Leninism and its misreading of Indian politics woven into an incitement to rebellion, is reminiscent of a letter addressed by Lenin to the British Labour Party just before the Scarborough Conference. That letter

turned the Conference against Bolshevism and all its works and led to a descisive repudiation of Third Internaional. This appeal may well have a similar effect if it comes to notice in India. Still the writers' belief in indenogenous Bolshevism in India is interesting, if not insignificant.

**INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD :** Some scraps of information are available regarding a few well-known persons, which indicate how they are working together. Mohendra (sic) Nath Ray was received in Europe by Birendra Nath Das Gupta, who forwarded him to Germany on his way to Reval. Birendra Nath Ghosh, recently released from the Andamans and now in Calcutta, is corresponding with Das Gupta, but with what object it is not known. Das Gupta himself wishes to return to India, A. A. Mirza, so long identified with Islamic and Pro-Bolshevik agitation in England, has at last made his way to Rome. Italy has become a most important centre of revolutionary intrigue. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, an old associate of Lajpat Rai in America where he still is, has applied for a passport to France. Mrs. Naidu has been travelling in Europe to the great interest of the revolutionaries, of whom Das Gupta writing to a friend in Italy strongly advised him to get an invitation to Italy extended to her and to see himself. This same letter described the printing of propaganda in Italy and their distribution through Germany and America.

Chattopadhyaya remains in Stockholm. He is reputed to receive Bolshevik money, though he is often short of funds and is thought to supplement his own earnings with the help of Swedish friends. He receives anti-British literature from America and republishes it in Sweden. He, too, has a plan for a communist revolt in India and is confident of its success. He hopes to send it to India by hand in September or October.

These details have been given because it is believed that the Indian revolutionaries abroad are beginning to show a new activity. They have found new Allies and, it would appear, new plans. They are quite unpractical enough to build on the hope of a Communist revolution and they are

just as ready as they ever were to be exploited by unscrupulous associates.

When the last mail left England the Third International was sitting in conference in Moscow.

The delegates of Asiatic countries, India, China and Korea etc. attended the preparatory Session of the Congress of the Third International and was warmly received. *Royde* (? *Roy*) who represented India declared that the flames of the social revolution were spreading and that Oriental people would soon follow the example of Russia. This *Royde* may be the ubiquitous N. N. Bhattacharjya. He was followed by other European speakers whose addresses were received with applause and are to be printed for propaganda purposes. Lenin is said to have announced (*Figaro* 22nd July) that Russia had no intention of pursuing the campaign against the West after Poland had been conquered, but that the world revolution would then extend itself to India where Irish Soldiers were distributing arms and munitions to the Hindus.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA : Some time ago it was reported that certain individuals in Calcutta had subscribed to and were receiving the *Workers Dreadnought* from England. The names of these individuals were given and enquiry was made about them in Calcutta. One of them only, Muhammad Yusha Knan, has been found to be receiving the paper; it could not be ascertained whether others were receiving or not. Mohammad Yusha Khan is a member of a big farm in Calcutta dealing in salted hides, he is Wahabi and a cousin of Mohammad Akram Khan, Khilafat agitator and editor of the *Mohammadi*. Yusha Khan helped Akram Khan with money to start this paper and supports him generally in political matters. This paper describes itself as published by the C. P. (British section of the Third International) editor Sylvia Pankhurst. Miss Pankhurst of course receives money from the Soviet Government and attended the recent conference of the Third Internatioanl at Moscow.

Another Bolshevik production has recently been found in India. It is called *Soviet Russia* and is published by Maartene

Bureau in New York. This particular copy was sent gratis to the editor of an Indian paper. The Soviet subsidised *Daily Herald* also appears to be received by every mail.

#### INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD

**B. N DASGUPTA :** The most interesting news of him is that he presented a petition to the Secretary of State praying that the terms of Royal amnesty may be applied to him. He was, he says, a most loyal subject until the war broke out when by his youthful eagerness for democratic political progress and his then love for Turkey he was induced to help His Majesty's former enemies. He makes the usual promises to amend and devote his full time and energy to further the industrial and commercial development of His Majesty's Indian Empire.

This merely means that, as reported from another source, he is home sick and anxious to return to India. He is said to believe, probably rightly, that the development of Indian industries is a fundamental step towards revolution. There is certainly no evidence of the sincerity of his repentance in the record of his recent activities ..... He has great faith in the Bolsheviks and says an agreement has been reached between them and the Indian revolutionaries. The main centre of work are, he says Moscow, Kabul and New York, San Fransisco and small centre in England Among the Indians in Moscow are Mukherjee, M. N. Roy and Halfsri (?) and Rash Behari Bose is according to him in Afghanistan along with Mahendra Pratap and Acharya.

It is perfectly true that M. N. Roy (N. N. Bhattacharyya) is in Russia and that Mahendra Pratap and Acharya are in Afghanistan. But nothing has been heard previously of Bose going to Afghanistan, a fact which would most probably have come to notice had it ocured. About Mukherjee there are excellnt grounds for believing him to have stayed in Germany to watch the work there. M. N. Roy won a considerable reputation for himself among the Indians in America by his communism in Mexico, and since he has arrived in Europe he has set himself to work on Bolshevik rather than on

nationalist line. His presence must tend to eclipse the old Indian Committee to whom by his Communist Manifesto he has declared himself antagonistic. But all the Berlin Indians are said to be anxious to join the Bolsheviks.

DIWANCHAND VARMA : This man claims for himself a considerable past as a revolutionary and to have been one of the first Indian "terrorists."

He is now a convinced Bolshevik and apparently in touch with some of the leaders, but he is rather out of touch with the Indian movement.

#### INDIAN COMMUNISTS

Reports about the following individuals have been received and are summarized below :

DALIP SINGH GIL, described as the son of a peasant in Patiala State and brother of a dacoit who was hanged, arrived in Switzerland from America during the war. He was suspected by the German Government of being a British spy and was enticed into Germany and arrested. He remained in Jail, where he made acquaintance of Liebknecht, until the Revolution. He was set free with Liebknecht and was supported by him and his party, through whom he came to know German and Russian Communists, Radek being one of his intimate friends. From them he conceived the idea of trying to introduce Communism into India and himself became a Communist. His efforts to secure the support of other communists were failed by his ignorance of German, he therefore associated Mansur (Dr. Mansur) with himself and thus made his own progress easy.

Chattopadhyay is still in Stockholm and states that he too has hopes of obtaining Bolshevik money, with which he intends to start a paper called the "Indian Communist" to be distributed free all over the world. He has seen Kamenoff, who gives him a sham contract for purchasing chemicals in order to blind the police. He corresponds with Germany and Russia through Bolshevik couriers, is anxious to get B. N. Dutta from Berlin to help him and accuses Har Dayal of



having been bought by the British Government .....His faith is entirely fixed on the Bolsheviks, who are said to be preparing for an Indian Revolution in March next year, and whose Bureau of Eastern Propaganda is working harder than ever.....Chatto also hopes to make Bolsheviks of all Indians and intends to start with Rabindranath Tagore, whom he expects in Stockholm in September and October and whose recent utterance have been such as to encourage Chattos's hopes.

Saklatvala has been in communication with Roy (N. N. Bhattacharji) whilst the latter was in Moscow through a delegate who attended the conference from Glasgow who has now returned. Roy wants Saklatvala to establish an Indian Communist group associated with the British Communist Party. He states he has been seeking to influence in the direction of improving conditions of Indian workmen, and is in thorough agreement with Saklatvala in despising the Indian National Congress, which he regards as "an illegal assembly of a few aristocratic gentlemen" called together in order to dominate the mass of the people.

Moscow Conference—Reliable information gives names of delegate who represented various sections of British India as :

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| (1) Mahendra Pratap | (4) Roy.         |
| (2) Suhrawardy.     | (5) Mantu.       |
| (3) Martin.         | (6) Barkatullah. |

(7) Unknown.

All these men are well-known; Martin and Roy are two *aliases* of N. N. Bhattacharji. As far as their succeeding movements are concerned Suhrawardy is at present under examination at Constantinople where he went via Tiflis, which place he communicated with his family in Bengal asking for money and stating he was "quite well."

N. N. Bhattacharji is reported to be with Jamal Pasha's mission to Afghanistan and there is some reason to believe that he may attempt to enter India.

B. N. Das Gupta is going to Stockholm as soon as his brother arrives, but he expects to return in about a month. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and B.N. Dutta from Berlin are also off to Stockholm. There is to be a meeting of the members of the Executive Committee of the Indian National Society as soon as everyone is assembled. Dutt has sent a wire in Cipher to Das Gupta to proceed to Stockholm at once.

#### INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD

**THE BERLIN HINDU GROUP :** B. N. Dutt's correspondence is still the main source of news of this dwindling body of the irreconcilables. He recently wrote that the "Traitors" had left Germany for London a few days previously; that some of them were approvers like Dr. C. Chakravarty and among them was one likely to keep his word and work furtively in India. Dutt remarked that he was delighted to have got rid of these useless persons and to be left with a clean sheet, though there were still some who would have to be removed. Now was the time, he said, to procure fresh blood from India to assist in the accomplishment of their heavy task. Accordingly he asked Das Gupta at least to induce Jatin Sette (?) and Fazlul Hak Hasrat Mohavi (an Aligarh graduate) to join him as soon as possible; he added that he had addressed a similar request to Chattopadhyaya.

It is believed that Hasrat Mohavi (or Mohani) is identical with the individual interned in India for complicity in the silk letter case; in short the individual now so prominent in the Khilafat agitation. Regarding Jatin Sette (?) Das Gupta remarked in conversation that he was an extreme revolutionary who had been interned but was now free. He is an M. A. of Calcutta whose real name may be Jatindranath Sen or Seth.

**SOVIET DESIGNS ON INDIA :** That the Bolshevik Government is thoroughly earnest in its hope to provoke revolution in India, as the best means of wrecking the British empire, as I think, been so proved as to leave not the slightest doubt

in anybody who is open to conviction. Bolshevik speakers and writers have openly proclaimed their intentions and spread the announcements over the world. From every direction have come secret reports of plans and intrigues undertaken to give effect to these designs. Every revolutionary party or society seems secure in its hope of financial and other assistance from Lenin and his friends. The distinction, therefore, which is made for clearness in this report between revolutionary bodies and Bolshevik agencies is a false distinction, because now-a-days every revolutionary organisation whatever its origin seeks alliance with Bolshevism.

The important question then is by what methods the Bolsheviks can hope to execute their plans in India. They can rely either on an invasion from Central Asia of forces raised by themselves, or on indigenous agencies in India, or on a combination of the two. Indigenous agencies are certainly hard at work to promote disaffection against government. Their methods are certainly skilful and as such are likely to rot the core of Government's strength by disaffecting its servants, military and civil, and by destroying the influence of the more conservative elements of Indian Society through the promotion of a government of dictatorship of the proletariat. That their methods are disguised as Khilafat agitation or election campaign need not affect their result. As regards the likelihood of invasion this seems more remote.

**INDIAN BOLSHEVIKS:** A report from Geneva of the 18th February declares that Bravin, the Bolshevik emissary has made his way into India with three Indian assistants and that he is working round about Peshawar where a secret conference was to be held in February. This Conference was to have been of the greatest importance as it was to have united the islamic and non-islamic parties for the war against England; and one Nafis was anxious to attend at all costs.

Enquiry is made about Nafis who is said to be a native of Trans-Caspia, who was in Calcutta in 1902-05 and visited

Persia, Moscow, Switzerland and Berlin where he was associated with Chempakaraman Pillai. He may possibly be identical with the notorious Abdul Hafiz of the Zurich Bomb case. But the report, so far as the object of the Peshawar Conference is concerned, is given with the greatest reserve.

Another report states that there are now 150 Indians in Moscow and Petrograd who are undergoing instructions in the art of propaganda. When qualified in these school Indians return to their native country. A German named Preetz or Praetz, long engaged in India as merchant or manufacturer in the textile trade and now in Berlin is declared to have stated that he had received from Lenin the enormous sum of 50 million United States gold dollars and 1 Milliard of Czarist paper roubles for the purpose of propagating the Bolshevik gospel in India.

#### IMPORTED BOLSHEVISM IN INDIA

The letters printed below have a peculiar interest as to whether they are explained as emanating from real Bolshevik emissaries or from Indians aiming Bolshevism. There is no foundation in fact for the widely spread rumour that Bravin has succeeded in entering India with two of his assistants. In fact he was superseded in Afghanistan by Suritz and is believed now to be in Caucasia. But this name may be a cloak for the emissaries who actually are in India.

To	Camp Bat Khel
The Editor,	Via Malakand
"The Englishman", Calcutta	N.W.F. Province
	<i>The 10th April, 1920.</i>

Dear Sir,

His Excellency M. Bravin has directed me to inform you that the Soviet Government will watch with great interest the reposed treaty of friendship between Great Britain and the God Granted Kingdom of Afghanistan. No doubt his Majesty Amir Amanullah Khan Al Ghazi has gained his complete independence through the energies of his able Foreign

Minister Sardar Mahmod Beg Kham Tarzi, and is at liberty to establish his friendly relations with the Foreign Powers, but the special points we are anxious to know are :

1. What will be the fate of the frontier people who are looking anxiously towards Afghanistan for protecting them from British Government's aggressiveness?
2. Under whose control the frontier tribes will be placed?
3. By remaining friendly with Afghanistan, will the Indians get self-government from the British?
4. Will Afghanistan gain some thing from the British?

The case of Egypt and Persia, is before the eyes of the whole world. Our agents in Simla and Delhi have informed us that for the sake of her interest in Persia and Mesopotamia, the British Government have resolved to crush the old Turkish Muslim Government and to show their impartiality and innocence to the Islamic world, they are prepared to grant some concessions to the Afghan Government who will be asked instead to check the Bolshevik advance on India.

I will communicate with you on the subject again on arrival at Kashmir. Will you kindly publish it in your paper and also inform the Government about it?

Yours truly,  
Sd/- M. Alexief  
chief Agent to Bolshevik's  
Bureau for Northern India.

To  
The Editor,  
"The Amrita Bazar Patrika," Calcutta.

\*the letter above

Dear Sir,

I am directed to forward you a copy of a letter on reverse\* and beg to publish it in your paper.

Mr. Lenin has read the dreadful account of massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in your esteemed paper and has authorised me to make this known to the people of India that the Soviet

Government are in full sympathy with the just cause of their Indian brethren. As you are editing the best nationalist paper in India, I have ventured to send this letter to you for publication in case the "Englishman" does not care to take any action on it.

Copy forwarded  
to the Editor,  
the "Democrat"  
for information.

Yours eternally,  
Sd/- M. Alexief  
Chief Agent to Bolshevik  
Bureau for Northern India.

MAHENDRA NATH ROY : This Indian revolutionary escaped arrest in the United States by fleeing to Mexico with his American wife. There he continued the production of pamphlets and literature attacking the British Indian Government. On one occasion, as reported at the time, he offered the fruits of his labours to the German embassy for any purpose for which they could be employed. It was there too that he was converted to the Communist Creed and associated himself with Lynn A. E. Gale and other Bolsheviks and eventually became the leader of the Mexican Communists. But for a brief appearance as a labour agitator at Tampico his Bolshevism found only a literary expression, so far as is at present known. It is now reported that he left Mexico on January 15th last and that he is believed to be on his way to Russia *via* Spain. Since his departure 'EL Communists' the organ of the Communist Party has not appeared and it is thought that lack of funds and lack of a suitable person to take direction of it will prevent its reappearance in future.

"LENIN THE STRATEGIST"—"Lenin has very good reason for the Indian, Egyptian, Persian and other Nationalist intrigues which he is promoting against Great Britain. He regards it as impossible to exercise and direct influence on the English workmen which lead them along the paths of communism. Consciously or unconsciously, the English working man feels himself to be the Centre of an Empire, the prosperity of which depends on its colonies. He is thus too well off, and too deeply imbued with the idea of property and self-interest to be influenced by communist propaganda. The

utmost of which he is capable is a progressive series of bargains with Capitalism and by that route communism will never be reached. But, if England were deprived of her colonies, then her industrial condition would be no better than that of the countries of the European mainland and her exchange would fall as there has done. The English workmen would then cease to be prosperous or contended, and England could be made as ripe for communism as France or Italy. Therefore, in so far as England is concerned, Lenin is devoting himself ardently to the destruction of her Empire and the liberation of her colonies."

#### **BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA IN INDIA**

**BEPIN CHANDRA PAL**, who had been on tour in East Bengal, and Sylhet, along with **Srish Chatterjee**, pleader of well-known revolutionary tendencies, had returned to Calcutta. Detailed report of his speeches during his recent tour show that they were of a more than usually objectionable nature. At Sylhet on 23rd September he delivered a speech obviously intended to excite the people of that district most of whom belong to the Baisnab sect. Universal brotherhood and self-reliance, he pointed out are the keynotes of the lives of both the Bolsheviks and the Baisnab, the only difference being in respect of violence to which the Bolsheviks are accustomed. Just as the Baisnab goes to Sri Brindaban, so the Bolsheviks, are also coming to India.

**RASH BEHARI BOSE** : A Report was received sometime ago that Bose was probably in Afghanistan in touch with the Bolseheviks. This has to some extent been corroborated by a confessing revolutionary in Bengal who reports that another absconder and associate of Rash Behari named **Amarendra Chatterjee** is in touch with the Bolshevik, through Rash Behari, while a different Calcutta Police source reports that **Amarendra** has recently been in Afghanistan.

A report has been received that **Khalil Makdour**, a member of the Egyptian party in Geneva, has been asked to join a Bolsheviks Party which left Berlin in March to stir up trouble on the Indian frontier.

It is noticeable that a good many rumours of imaginary Bolshevik successes are current in Northern India. These chiefly concern the relation between Bolshevism and Afghanistan, the intentions to the Amir to outwardly profess friendship and to suddenly descend on India at a favourable opportunity, and the spread of unrest among the frontier tribes etc. The return from Afghanistan of large numbers of ignorant *Muhajirin* is sufficient explanation in itself of the source from which these rumours originate, and there is no reason, on present evidence, to suppose that they are the work of Bolshevik agents who have penetrated India.

In one of the recent numbers of the India News Service issued by the Friends of Freedom for India an account is given of the part played by Roy (N. N. Bhattacharya) at the Moscow Conference. According to this he showed himself "*plus royaliste que le roi*" in opposing Lenin, who wished to support existing Nationalist agitation in India as a means of overthrowing the present administration preparatory to the establishment of Bolshevism. Roy held that agitation in India was confined to the middle classes, and that the purity of Bolshevik ideals should not be sullied by any cooperation with the "bourgeois". He ultimately allowed himself to be convinced by Lenin—the whole affair was probably a move to gain notoriety.

**THE BERLIN GROUP :** It is reported from Berlin that Acharya who is now in Moscow, has written to Chattopadhyaya in Stockholm informing him that the Russians are now concentrating their energies on rendering assistance to the Pan-Islamic Movement, as such, and as outside other political movement. This attitude, Acharya points out, must be strongly protested against.

Upon receipt of this letter Chatto decided to go at once in person to Moscow, it being felt that should this line be taken up and persisted in by Russia, it would be highly detrimental to the interest of Indian independence. Further it appears that Dutta has already sent an ultimatum on this subject to Lenin by the hand of a lady who has recently gone to Moscow, named



Clara Szetky (*sic*). Das Gupta went to Berlin and from there to Stockholm, in order to join Chatto. Dutta was also to go, but had not, at the date of the report, obtained a passport. The three of them intend holding a conference in Stockholm and Chatto will then proceed to Moscow.

It is understood that should the negotiations with the Russian Government turn out unsatisfactorily, a violent anti-Revolutionary Propaganda will be started by the leaders of the Indian Revolutionary movement in Europe. At the moment they are at a loss to know how to act. Das Gupta (who is travelling under the name of Haider) will return from Stockholm to Berlin, in about a fortnight's time. Dr. Ghose, his wife and nephew have met Chatto but it is not definitely known where the meeting took place.

Chatto's intention of visiting Moscow has been confirmed from another source. It appears that he has received Bolshevik funds through Hellberg who is a prominent member of the Central Bolshevik Committee of Stockholm, and that he intends to accompany Litvinoff on his journey to Russia via Reval.

At the Baku Conference in September Enver Pasha proclaimed his agreement with the views of the Third International in the name of Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Arabia and India.

Roy, representative of India, was apparently responsible for the statement that there were over 37 million landless peasants in India and that the entire land was in the possession of some six or seven hundred princely families. He regretted however to admit that the national India movement was being carried on by the middle classes. It is difficult to believe that even Roy would make the preposterous statement that all the lands of India in the hands of some six or seven hundred princely families, but his regret that the national India movement is being carried on by the middle classes is entirely in the strain of a letter he wrote from Reval at the end of May to a friend in America. In the course of that letter Roy said, "If the Nationalists leaders don't see our point of view we are determined to part with them and even fight them if

necessary, and it is inevitable that we must fight the Nationalists either now or later. Since we are convinced that the establishment of Nationalists Government would not emancipate the masses."

Roy is out for notoriety, and means to impress the Bolsheviks with his importance. It is difficult to estimate what influence he carries, probably it is not very great. From the latest report it appears that he has decided to remain in Tashkent for a few months and has abandoned his intention of proceeding to Kabul.

SNEEVLIETS, who was recently reported to be *en route* for the Far East, where he was to carry on Bolshevik propaganda, has suddenly returned to Holland. It is strongly suspected that his change of plans was due to direct orders from Moscow, in connection with Rabindra Nath Tagore's visit to Holland. The Soviet Government sometime back invited Tagore and Sir Jagadish Bose to a congress to be held in Moscow to discuss Orientalism and Internationalism, and Sneevliet's mission was apparently to prepare Tagore's mind for the proposal which would be made to him at Moscow. The Communists in Holland watched Tagore very closely during his stay, and as a result an adverse report concerning him is said to have been sent to Moscow, as Tagore did not associate with communists, neither were his lectures appreciated by them.

PROPAGANDA IN INDIA : Many references have of late been made to Bolshevik plans for flooding India with agents and literature, and that such is their desire no doubt. But there is little evidence in India to show that these plans have ever been carried into execution.

It is possible that men have entered the country who have been supplied with money from Russian sources, on the understanding that they would carry on Bolshevik propaganda; but once in India their connection with Bolshevism, has gone no further than taking Soviet money. Probably most of these so-called agents had no intention of carrying out their contracts, they desired to return to India and had no objection to return with money obtained

at the cost of promises which they knew it would be impossible to enforce.

So far as indirect methods are concerned, such as subsiding existing agitation, it is not easy to appreciate the situation. The labour unrest in large industrial centres is an obvious instance where Bolshevik influence might be suspected. Of the prominent labour leaders, Lajpat Rai has Bolshevick leanings, Chaman Lal is in close touch with English Communists through Saklatvala in London. It is therefore not difficult to show a certain connection with Russian ideas, but up to the present no proof has been obtained of any Russian money behind the labour agitation. The rise in prices and economic causes generally are sufficient in themselves to explain the present epidemic of strikes.

f. 312-April

J & P (S) 3698/20

India office  
Whitehall

London, S. W. I

*Secret*

18th March, 1920

Dear sir,

I forward, for information, a copy of the papers noted in the margin, on the subject of connection between the Indians at Berlin and the Bolsheviks at Moscow.

Letter dated 5.3.20  
from the Italian  
Ambassador to the  
Foreign Office.

Yours faithfully  
*Sd/- Illegible*  
Secretary,  
Judicial & Public Department.

APRIL 312

Translation No. 479

Italian Embassy

*Confidential*

March 5th, 1920.

My Lord,

I have the honour to inform your Lordship in case the information may be of use, that according to news which my Government has received from Italian Minister at Berne, it appears that Djevedet Bey, proprietor of the journal

"Idkam," and resident at St. Moritz, where he maintains relations with Nedjmeden Molla and other Unionists has declared that the Indians who were at Berlin have departed for Moscow with the object of negotiating with Lenin. (the news of the Indians' departure from Berlin has also been confirmed by a telegram from Berlin to the "Neue Urcher Zeitung"). These men have had proclamation published in the various dialects of Western and Central Asia.

Indian propaganda is said to have been greatly helped by the Unionists, almost all the Indians who were at Berlin being inscribed as members of the Committee of Union and Progress. One of them has been sent to Switzerland.

It appears on the other hand that Germany is preparing to give the maximum amount of support to this propaganda and that aeroplanes are ready to go to Moscow and organise from there a vast service of communications with Turkestan and Afghanistan.

The Right Hon'ble Earl Curzon  
of Kedleston, K.G.

I have & c.  
(Signed) Imperiam

BERLIN TO SWITZERLAND : Recent reports confirm the information given in previous weekly Report that the Berlin Committee are in communication with *Ghadr Party* in San Fransisco and the Friends of Freedom for India in New York.

All communications between the Berlin Committee and the outside would appear to pass through the hands of Das Gupta in Zurich where he is known as M. A. Haider. This man has been recently described as the most active and dangerous of the Indian conspirators and has recently replaced Prabhakar as the leader of these men. From his retreat at Zurich he is in touch with many phases of the great anti-British conspiracy.

A very optimistic letter reached him from B. N. Dutt in Berlin at the beginning of November. The writer asserted that the fight for India was about to begin and that Afghanistan would resume hostilities in six month's time. He alluded in cryptic terms to a most frotunate event which has just occured and which made him feel sure that the days of British domination in India were numbered. He pleaded the attention of

British spies as an excuse of not saying more about it, but promised full detail when he met Das Gupta at the Socialist Conference in Switzerland in January. He added that owing to the great responsibility of his work he had summoned Chattopadyaya from Stockholm and was anxiously awaiting his arrival. In a letter Dutt gave Das Gupta news received 'at last and after great difficulty' from Indian Committee in Kabul. He described their activities in Afghanistan and their efforts to utilise Kashmir as a secret jumping-off place for work in India. He wrote hopefully of the progress made, but excused himself from giving details. (It is noteworthy that Har Dayal sometimes ago urged the desirability of making use of Kashmir, particularly for importing arm into India, and said he had a friend in Srinagar ready to help. In a third letter Dutt informed Das Gupta that Chattopadhyaya has sent Tarak Nath Das 5,000 Kronen through his attorney Gilbert E Roe (Roe is defending various Indians in deportative and other cases and was recently elected a president of Friend of Freedom for India).

Das Gupta has also received letters from Tarak Nath Das and Sailendra Nath Ghosh in America both appealing for funds from the Berlin Committee; Das on the ground that the work, he is doing benefits the Germans as well as Indians, and Ghosh on the ground that his work must be carried out on a far larger scale. Ghosh also said that he had received a very important message from India together with a letter from a certain Satu which is to be delivered personally either to B. N. Dutt or Das Gupta.

**ACTIVITY IN CENTRAL ASIA :** Fifty-four schools have been opened at Tashkent, mainly for propaganda purposes where oriental languages are taught and some Indians are engaged as instructors. Propaganda literature is also being prepared. As agents become proficient they are to be sent to India, China and all other countries having a Muhammadan population. Those for India will enter mostly by Afghanistan under Afghan auspices or by sea under various disguises.

The decision to concentrate all efforts on India was recently re-affirmed by the Tashkent Soviet, because it is hoped to decide there the destruction of the British empire and the future of the world proletariat. It is understood that centres where propaganda will be partly prepared are to be opened in India.

#### RECIPROCAL MOVEMENTS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND INDIA

The following was issued by wireless on December 12th:

"Russian papers report that an Indian Bolshevik Commission is said to have arrived at Samara in order to enter into relations with Soviet Russia".

The *Svenska Dagbladet* of Helsingfors gave the following details about the same time:

"Indian Bolshevik Commission is actually in Samara. The chiefs have declared that 300 millions of Indians are awaiting a favourable occasion for rejecting the British slavery and that they want to join with Russia".

From Sweden too comes the report that about 100 agitators have been sent to India from the schools in Moscow. I have received detailed reports about 3 such agitators have been sent to India from schools in Moscow.

Two are Finns who were expected at the beginning of January to leave Stockholm for India as propagandists. Their names are given as Issenivs and Karl Harrin; but they were expected to travel with forged or stolen passports as Harry Bennet, American and Thomas Grieg, British. Issenius is believed to be identical with Allæn Usenius an extremely dangerous propagandist. Nothing is known for certain of Karl Harrin, but he is possibly Hurmev Aara, a Finnish Bolshevik of some importance in Stockholm.

The third man is Dr. Max Fischer. It may be mentioned here though he is not known as a Bolshevik, but he is employed by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was reported in December to be on his way to Trieste for India for anti-British propaganda. He possesses 5 passports, three in his own name as commercial agent, consular agent,

and tourist and two under an assumed name. This man is perhaps identical with a man of the same name who was working with the Chinese revolutionaries in Shanghai in 1916.

**A BENGALI BOLSHEVIK :** The Intelligence Branch, C.I.D., Bengal has received the result of enquiries made with regard to Shaheed Suhrawardy, who was one of the first Indians to throw in his lot with the Soviet Government in Moscow. This man was a well-known revolutionist. His father Zahid Suhrawardy, a judge of the Calcutta Small Causes Court, has not heard of his son for a long time and is unwilling to talk about him. He believes him to be in touch with the Bolsheviki. An officer who knows the family recently ascertained from one of their relations that one of the members have gone to Russia via Afghanistan and been detained there. On inquiry whether any information could be obtained in Calcutta about Suhrawardy it was said that a Russian named Ivanhow could give information. This Russian was said to be a great Arabic and Persian scholar who had come to India to prosecute his studies and had been on friendly terms with Suhrawardy on account of the latter's knowledge of Arabic. No Russian named Ivanhow is known in Calcutta, but inquiries are made to trace him.

#### **INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD**

**THE BERLIN INDIAN COMMITTEE :** Information has come from Berlin regarding many Indian renegades in Europe. This shows that the community is considerably exercised in mind regarding the ultimate fate of its members, and that considerable friction exists between the Hindu and Muhammadan members. Details are given to illustrate the case with which individual renegades, even those who have not worked whole-heartedly with Germany, can obtain grants of money from the German Foreign Office. The active organisations of the Indians at the moment are:

1. The Orient Institute.
2. The Indische Gesellschaft
3. The Hindustan Sabha

It is not very clear to what end these different organisation are directed. The first seems to be working to maintain the pro-German and anti-British feelings of the various orientals in the lately belligerent countries. The second of which B. N. Dutt is the head is reported to be directly under the German Foreign Office, and all the Hindus in Germany belong to it. The third is the Indo-German Bolshevik Society founded about 6 months ago by Dr. Mansur, Verma and Dalip Singh with the object of spreading Bolshevism in India. It is reported to be most flourishing. According to Dalip Singh it has members in Sweden, Russia, Austria, Egypt, Turkey and America and is much helped by the local communist party in Berlin.

**PRESS AND PLATFORM BOLSHEVISM :** The attitude of the Press towards Bolshevism is still following the lines indicated in a recent weekly Report. The opinion to be formed from a study of articles and speeches on the subject is that the extremist politician is becoming more and more inclined to dabble in extreme socialism. Whatever may be the individual view of socialism there can be little doubt that its doctrines combined with existing conditions in India form a dangerously inflammable mixture.

The chief exponents of Bolshevism in the press at the moment are the *Hindu* of Hyderabad (Sindh) and the small group of extremist journalists at Cawnpore who are connected with *Pratap* and the *Prabhu*. This group has been noticed in recent issues of this report. Now the *Maryada* has been inoculated with the virus. This paper belongs to Madan Mohan Malaviya whose nephew Krishna Kanto Malaviya is the editor. Its circulation is about 1,600 and it is printed at the same press as the *Abhyudaya* which has a circulation of 3,500. The United Provinces CID which reports these facts, has drawn attention to these articles in the *Maryada* for February. Of these two are written by Rama Shankar Avasthi, assistant editor of the *Pratap*.



The first article asserts that people now realise that no amount of villification or denunciation of Bolshevism can check its onward progress. No one can be sure that it will keep within the boundaries of Russia. It has propaganda in most European countries and in America and is a great menace to capitalism and imperialism. Lenin and Trotsky are true patriots; they have crushed their enemies, improved the economic conditions of Russia and are carrying on the internal administration smoothly. Mr. Lloyd George is in favour of concluding Peace with them. They have had to go through a very difficult ordeal but have come out successful.

The *Hindu* of Hyderabad (Sindh) published on January 30th an article on the "Bolshevik danger to India" from which the following is taken :

"In our opinion whether the Bolshevik attack or preach their propaganda or not, if the grievances of the public against the Government continue and the quarrels between labourers and the wealthy go on, men themselves under similar provocations as have the Russians will be affected with Bolshevism; and subsequently, if similar bloodshed and disturbances occur, it will not be surprising. If this danger is not attended with risk today, it will be to-morrow. Therefore, it appears to be our duty to oppose this danger and for this we should prepare now. We should improve the condition of our backward brethren, and having shown our sympathy to them, we should strengthen the nation. Otherwise if, like the rich people of Russia or England, we oppress the backward classes, their sorrows and grievances will re-act on this nation."

On February 2nd Jethmal Parsaram, a notorious Sindhi agitator, lectured on socialism to an audience of 300. The speaker's argument was difficult to follow, coloured as it was with facts distorted to suit his argument. He concludes by saying :

"We should get more rights of Home Rule. Officers, you are only a few. It is our country and you should give

us the reins. India is not yours, seventy five per cent of Indians are poor, and if you have their reins they will starve. These poor men you should care for. When they get the votes they will trouble you very much. What you call Bolshevism is really hunger."

In reporting the lecture the Bombay Special Branch remarked that the lecture was significant for two reasons : "it shows how the extremists are deliberately fostering industrial discontent; and secondly how they or at any rate a section of them are prepared to welcome Bolshevism for the furtherance of their own ends. The reporting sub-Inspector noted that the whole trend of the lecture was to dispose the audience favourably towards Bolshevism."

It is perhaps worth noting here the *Gale's Magazine of Revolutionary Communism* has been advertised for sale and actually obtained in both Karachi and Bombay. The magazine is published in Mexico by a disreputable individual named Lynn E. Gale who fled from the United States during the war to avoid the draft. His magazine is openly Bolshevik and advocates "New Thot". Gale himself is an associate of Narendra Bhattacharya *alias* C. Martin in Mexico.

#### SPECIMENS OF PRO-BOLSHEVISM AND OTHER SPEECHES IN INDIA

Speaking at a Khilafat meeting at Lahore on February 8th last, Gobardhan Das, ex-convict is reported to have praised the Bolsheviks and said that the rich had no right to live so comfortably when the poor were in trouble. He described Bolshevik principles as quite natural and praiseworthy and advocated them as worth following. He wished, he said, to see Bolshevism preached and acted upon in India.

INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES ABROAD : Reliable information has been received to the effect that Mahendra Pratap, Abdur Rabb and Acharyya are in Kabul at the beginning of January last. They had previously spent two months in Moscow, and had passed through Turkestan on their way to Afghanistan. In January too, Barkatullah was in Moscow, but was shortly to have gone to Turkestan. Chattopadhyay in Stockholm was

asked to communicate with him through the Moscow Foreign Office. The last named was also instructed that it was desirable that he, Hardayal and other Indians in Europe should get in touch with representatives of the Russian Republic in different places. Relations were also to be established between Indian communities in all parts of the world and the Russian Government. Men of integrity and principles were to be sent to Russia for propaganda work.

From Christiana it is reported that the European Indian Committee is beginning an intensive propaganda in order to undermine the reputation of the British Govt. The general ignorance of Norwegians regarding India and their sentimental character are believed to favour the revolutionists. Otherwise Chattopadhyay is reported to be following a law-abiding life, and his sister Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is said to be lecturing on Indian subjects without reference to politics.

#### THE SOVIET'S INTEREST IN INDIA

*The Gazette de Lausanne* of February 12th has contained a remarkable article by one Sergy Persky entitled "Lenin et les Indes Britanniques." This has been a stock subject with the French Press for sometime past, but most of the articles have been merely copied from English papers. That in the *Gazette* was of different calibre. The writer described the disillusionment which has overtaken the American politicians who in 1918 denied that Bolshevism has any interest for them; and the disillusionment which awaits the British premier if he imagines he can confide in Lenin's promises or trust him to abandon Bolshevik propaganda when the blockade is raised. While Litvinoff exchanged sweet words at Stockholm, Moscow worked hard to Bolshevise Afghanistan and the British colonies and awaited the moment for effective work in England... But it is India spearhead that they (Bolsheviks) attack."

In September 1918 the Council of Workmen and Soldiers at Moscow received five Hindus "Messengers of Indian People", really creatures of Lenin, who picturesquely

described the sufferings of their compatriots and the oppression of the English. "All our hopes", they concluded, "are based on you, our brothers". "Come and deliver us and we shall bless you."

The writer then described two copies of a curious book which he had received from Moscow several months before. One copy was in Russian, the other in Hindi, and it was called:

"India for the Indians, Blue Book; collection of secret documents. Edition of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, Moscow, 1st edition."

On the front page in large characters was printed:

INDIA FOR THE INDIANS.

DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALISTS.

LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL.

The volume purports to be a collection of consular reports and letters from India received during the Tsarist regime and taken from the Archives of the Imperial Foreign Office.

Describing the periodical failure of crops, famines etc. the preface declares that it is the worst of the errors to attribute these entirely to natural causes. The only rational remedy is a complete change of the agrarian laws and the formation of a grain reserve. But England will not allow India to reserve the grain which she requires for herself, since she lives by the exploitation of her colonies. English policy towards India, both economic and administrative, is despotic in a degree equal to that of the old Tsarist regime. Neither the divine will nor the Indian workmen—so hard working and so well endowed for work, is to blame for the famines; the guilty one is the Englishman, egotistical and ferocious, who for more than a century has sucked the blood of his unfortunate victim. "This abominable policy of England" is illustrated by descriptions of the army, the police and the system of taxation.

As a result there is a national movement for liberty, which has united all classes, and is growing in strength daily with the ultimate object of throwing off the hated yoke. For

England this will be a terrible blow. England without India is of no account : for this reason she has always refused to lighten her yoke. It is fair to say that England only entered the World War for the sake of India and the routes to India. Seeing danger from Germany and Austria she did not hesitate to throw one-half of Europe upon the other and finally to drag the whole civilised world into the bloody conflict.

The importance of India to England is thus enormous; and the freedom of India is thus of vital moment, and every possible means of affecting it must be employed. An Indian revolution would cause a world-wide shock, and without an independent India there can be no general peace. We must therefore not only acclaim an Indian revolution, but with every means at our disposal we must work for it directly or indirectly. Let our Indian friends take this expression of our sentiments as a formal engagement to help them. In the not distant future we shall have the joy of seeing our two revolutionary roads meet and join, not only on the ground of national enfranchisement, but also on the yet more burning soil of the struggle of the classes and of the reconstruction of a new social edifice and order.

#### LENIN & BENGAL

A report has been received which states that Lenin intends to form in Bengal an organisation based on the old Bande Mataram movement which is still vivid in the recollection of the natives. It also states that Lenin is the prime mover in the fabrication of paper money.

### 1921

#### INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES AND THE BOLSHEVIKS

A large amount of space has been given in recent weekly reports to account of the revival of revolutionary activity amongst Indians in Europe which has resulted under Chattopadhyay's leadership. A report has been since received from a source entirely independent from that on which

previous accounts have been based. It is interesting both as largely corroborating previous information and as giving certain new facts. There are naturally discrepancies, but the main outlines of the story are in agreement with what is already known. Chatto, it is stated was in Moscow, towards the end of 1920, and whilst there succeeded in obtaining a promise of assistance from the Soviet Government. One of the conditions imposed, however, was that Chatto should show proof that he actually represented the Indian Revolutionary and Communist Parties, and the proof asked for was a "Mandate" signed by the leading revolutionaries and Communists. Chatto was not able to produce any such mandate, but is now engaged in drawing all the well know revolutionaries into his net so that he may satisfy the Soviet Government and obtain their assistance as soon as possible. This strengthens the surmise made in a previous Weekly Report that Chatto's reorganisation scheme has been designed chiefly to attract Russian financial assistance.

Of the fact which are new, the following are the most interesting. Chatto whilst in Berlin met the leaders of the Egyptian, Persian, and Turkish Committees, as well as several Germans and Americans, and on all sides received promises of assistance and cooperation. He has been reproached for going too slow, and for holding meetings which result in nothing but talk, but he pointed out in reply that they failed badly once before, even with the greatest power at their back and their failure was to be ascribed to the fact that they did their work without due care and consideration.

Chatto has opened the old bureau of the Berlin/Indian Committee and has appointed Heramba Lal Gupta as Secretary for the time being. B. N. Dutt has been made General Secretary for Europe of the Indian Committee. The objects of the Indian Committee agree with the information already received, but a new suggestion is the smuggling of Communist propaganda literature into India by means of (Indian ?) sailors who visit various Indian ports. The Indian Committee do not consider it safe to send "trained" Indians back to India,

and it is proposed to utilise the services of European Socialists and Communists for propaganda work in India.

With regard to Communication with India, the Committee have come to the conclusion that the only way this can be done are:

- (1) Either through English Socialists, or
- (2) Indian students in London.

In the case of the latter, only those are to be employed who are entirely above suspicion.

Interest now centres on Chatto's visit to Moscow, and if he can succeed in persuading the Soviet Government to give him satisfactory financial backing we may see interesting developments.

#### CHATTOPADHYAY'S GROUP

Further progress has been made in Chatto's scheme as far as commercial side is concerned. His proposal for propaganda and political activities, will probably be left in abeyance until it is known what assistance Soviet Government will give.

B. N. Das Gupta has decided to leave Switzerland and to establish the H. Q. of the Indo-European Trading Company in Germany where it is thought that most of the work will be conducted. As a further step he has secured accomodation in Berlin and Leipzig and has left Kasim to manage the branch in Zurich.

Chatto and Heramba Lal Gupta is passing under the false name of Lopez and Chatto is an absconder in a Swiss political case. The share-holders of the concern will be shown as :—

B. N. Das Gupta  
S. N. Das Gupta  
S. K. Ray,  
Abdul Wahid, and

Ismail Kamil, who is described as a Barrister-at-law and a member of the Legislative Council of the Government of Ceylon.

With regard to the recruitment of Indians for training

in Europe it is proposed to send S. N. Das Gupta and S. K. Ray back to India to search for suitable men. The Soviet Government are reported to be prepared to pay all the expenses incurred in bringing Indians to Europe for this work. Some of them will go direct to Russia for training in Press Propaganda and others will be sent to the various branches of the Indo-European Trading Company for industrial training.

Chatto's Group is much exercised as to how he can get the mandate required by the Soviet Government. He had been considering the possibility of utilising his sister (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu) for the purpose of approaching revolutionary leaders of India, but was not certain if she would be given permission to return (Note—she has already sailed for India).

**BAKU CONFERENCE :** Details from a reliable source has been received concerning the Indian Delegates who attended the Baku Conference held last September. These are said to have been seven in number, all residents of Peshwar, and with the exception of one Abdul Kadir were by profession petty traders. Abdul Kadir who acted as leader of the delegation, is described as the only man among them who apparently had any education. The party as a whole did not take a very active part in the actual Conference though it is stated that they were well received and much appreciated.

Four other Indians are mentioned who attended the Conference, but not direct from India. These are Roy, Mukherji, Maqbal Hussain and Misri Khan. The part played by Roy at Baku, and his subsequent activity at Tashkent, are well-known. It appears he is a personal friend of Lenin—who places the greatest confidence in him. His object is not only to win "freedom" for India but also to revolutionise it into adopting Bolshevism. In a conversation with Quelch, the delegate to Baku from England, Roy gave him to understand that there were hopes of Communism being established at least in Bengal, if nowhere else. He based this statement on the ground that Bengal was the brain of India, and religious



differences which work all the parts of India are less apparent in Bengal than elsewhere.

Mukherji is stated to be working under Roy's supervision in Tashkent in connection with the preparation of propaganda for India. He is described as an energetic worker well-trusted by the Bolsheviks, and he is probably identical with Abani Mukherji.

As regards the methods to be adopted for propaganda in India it seems that a great point is being made of training Russian Muhammadans with fair complexion which resemble Europeans as far as possible. It is hoped to introduce these men into India where their European appearance would have great effect with the ordinary villager.

#### PROPOSED TRANSFER OF PROPAGANDA HEADQUARTERS

Proposals are on foot for the transfer of the Indian revolutionaries in Bolshevik hands from Tashkent to Kabul. Roy is believed to be behind this proposed transfer, which finds favour with the Bolsheviks, as they require a base nearer India. Roy, Abdur Rab, and Acharyya were reported to have left Tashkent about January 20th for Moscow to attend a Conference of Indians (Note—Possibly a conference to discuss Chatto's proposals). It was considered uncertain whether Roy would himself return to Tashkent, his presence among the propagandists not conducive to peaceful and united effort. He is not in good *odour* with the Indians, who are reported to be disaffected towards their present employers. Friction has also occurred between Roy and Suritz, the Bolshevik representative at Kabul. A proposal has been made that Roy should be put in-charge of the advanced centre of propaganda at Kabul, and owing to Suritz's unwillingness to work with or under Roy, it is believed that Suritz may shortly be replaced by Legrand, the head Bolshevik representative in America.

CHATTO'S GROUP : It is not yet clear how far negotiations for financial assistance from Soviet Government has progressed. According to Das Gupta a definite sum has been mentioned, £50,000. This amount is however conditional on

Chatto being able to satisfy Lenin, both as to his position as leader of the Indian revolutionaries and also as regards the feasibility of his schemes. Chatto has not yet been able to obtain the mandate required as a preliminary step. The mandate is to be signed by well-known persons such as Gandhi and other leaders in India and Chatto though quite able to obtain signatures of Indian revolutionaries in Europe has not yet hit upon a scheme for approaching Indian leaders in India. The position is further complicated by the attitude taken up by Roy in Russia. Roy is also claiming to be the leader of the Indian Revolutionary party. He has considerable influence with Lenin and has done his best to discredit Chatto. The latter on his part has, during recent months, attempted to expose Roy to Lenin but apparently with little success. The matter would be simplified if Roy and Chatto would agree to work together but as far as Chatto is concerned he is not prepared to do this for the following reasons:

- (1) Roy is not considered sufficiently clever or stable.
- (2) He is believed to have embezzled party funds.

[Note :—This last accusation was brought against him by the Indians in America with whom he worked before his flight to Mexico.]

It is probable that Chatto will utilise the visit of his sister, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, to India, to approach Gandhi and other extremist leaders on his behalf; until the result of her efforts is known matters will probably remain at a stand still.

#### INDIAN ACTIVITY IN EUROPE

**CHATTO'S GROUP :** The question of obtaining financial assistance from the Soviet is still unsettled and remains the chief anxiety of Chatto and his followers. At the date of latest information (15th March) almost all the Indian revolutionary leaders were in Berlin, most probably in connection with the final settlement of the matter. At that time it was considered quite certain that the Soviets were prepared to contribute cash under certain safeguards, and Das Gupta had received a promise to that effect conveyed through the Soviet representative in Berlin. It remains to be seen what effect the

signing of the Trade Agreement between Great Britain and Russia, with its stipulation against anti-British propaganda will have on these plans.

Chatto continues to direct his attention towards linking up Indian revolutionary movements in various parts of the world in addition of Agnes Smedley of the Friends of Freedom for India, who as previously noted, has already arrived in Europe and is working as his Secretary, a proposal has been put forward that S. N. Kar should also be sent from America. If this proposal is carried out Kar will replace B. N. Dutt as head of the local Indian Committee in Berlin.

The American link has further strengthened by the arrival in Berlin of an American journalist named Lockmann. Lockmann was during the war, a financial intermediary between the organization in America and the German Embassy and has always been in close touch with the Indian movement. He is a personal friend of Agnes Smedley and is now being used as a Bolshevik propagandist and it is reported that he will shortly be sent to London with messages from Chatto to Indians in London.

With regard to Chatto's suggestion that openly revolutionary branches of his organisation should be established in the important European Capitals, an Indian Deputation recently approached the German Government on the subject and were given to understand that the title selected "The Indian Revolutionary Society" was an objectionable one and might give rise to trouble with England. The Government proposed that the Society should camouflage itself under the title of the "Indian News Service and Information Bureau, Limited", it being understood that so far from interfering with any revolutionary activities the German Government would render the Bureau its moral and material support. The inclusion of Agnes Smedley in this Bureau is under consideration.

Friction between M. N. Roy in Russia and Chatto still continues. It appears that Roy has induced the Soviet to despatch 40,000 dollars to the San Fransisco Ghadr Party.

Chatto heard of this from the Soviet Representative in Berlin and tried to stop the funds being despatched but was too late. He was particularly anxious to suspend payment until all the European groups were united, under his own control. A further report regarding Roy states that he has lost influence through an anti-Amirist speech he has recently made and it is reported that at Chatto's instance Roy was summoned and reprimanded.

Chatto's schemes for uniting all Indian revolutionaries in Europe under his own control have made further progress by the enlistment of the notorious Dr. Hafiz, who has agreed to become a member of the Central Executive Committee. It has further been settled that Hafiz should go to Afghanistan and open an ammunition factory that at the expense of the Committee, with funds which (it is anticipated) will be received from the Soviet. Hafiz is an expert chemist and is at present employed in Austria in an ammunition factory.

DALIP SINGH GILL : In Weekly Report of the 2nd of May, paragraph 5, it was noted that Dalip Singh Gill has been imprisoned by the Soviet Government in Moscow as a spy, at the request of the Berlin-Indian Committee. This news has been confirmed by a letter from Dalip Singh Gill addressed to the Latvian Consul General, Moscow, headed Buturskaya Prison Cell No. 30, Moscow, March 30th, 1921. A copy of this letter has come to our hands. It runs as follows:

"There is no British representative in Moscow. I send you this petition and beg you to afford me help as you do to American subjects, as in accordance with the text of the trade agreement between Soviet Russia and England, published in the *Pravda* of the 22nd March, British subjects are to be immediately released. Please clear up this matter as regards my case and obtain information regarding the possibility of returning to my native land."

This is Gill's third visit to Russia. After Gill had become a Communist in the winter of 1919 he went by Aeroplane from Berlin to Moscow, where he met various Russian leaders. He collected a considerable amount of money and on

his return to Berlin, began to work on Communist lines. In the early summer of 1920 Gill again started for Russia, supplied with funds provided by Gen. Hoffman and Talat Pasha, the object of his journey being to obtain further help from Bolsheviks. This time the aeroplane was shot down by the Poles and Gill was imprisoned for some time. On his release he returned to Berlin and trained himself in a scheme to send literature from Berlin to Russia by air and thence to India. Gill again went to Moscow in January of this year and while there was imprisoned as a British spy. His protest to the Latvian Consul, that as a British subject he should be released according to the terms of the trade agreement with England, contrasts strangely with his previous record.

#### CHATO GROUP AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIET

It is now possible to state further developments in Chatto's scheme for uniting revolutionary work under one head. Discussions with the Soviet Government have been going in for some time with a view to arranging a meeting in Moscow of all prominent Indian revolutionaries to settle future plans and the part which Russia would play in them. This meeting was to be held in Moscow on May 25th. After a conference lasting for two or three days it was hoped to place a complete scheme before the Soviet Government and before the Third International on the 1st of June. The subject of discussion was to be briefly the "best method for inaugurating a revolution in India". The following individuals were expected to be present in Moscow :

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (1) M. N. Roy   | (5) Amin Faruqui (Secretary of the Indian Revolutionary Party in Tashkent.) |
| (2) M.P.T. Acharya  | (6) V. Chattopadhyay  |
| (3) Abdul Rab   | (7) Dr. Ahmad Mansur  |
| (4) Shafiq Ahmad (Recently arrived from Afghanistan and one of the members of Provisional Government in Kabul.) | (8) B. N. Dutt.   |
|   | (9) P. S. Khankhoji <i>alias</i> Aga Khan.                                  |

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (10) G.A.K. Lohani (now<br>definitely admitted as<br>a member of the Com-<br>mittee but not on the<br>executive) | (12) Das Gupta<br>(13) Agnes Smedley<br>(14) Abdul Wahid<br>(15) Dr. Abdul Hafiz |
|--|--|
- (11) Nalini Gupta

In addition to the above, others were expected. There are 35 members on the Tashkent Indian Committee and it is probable that representatives of this Committee were to attend. From Paris Madame Cama and Rao have been invited. They were reported to be willing to go provided they could obtain permission from the French authorities. Srinivasha Vishwamitra (an Indian recently expelled from Denmark as an alleged Communist) and Chatto's brother has also been mentioned in connection with the Moscow meeting, while it is said that some Indians have been invited from England. These selections have not been made without a certain amount of opposition from the Soviet Government and its representative in Berlin, chiefly owing to the fact that some of the names in the list are those of well known nationalists. Mrs. M. N. Roy, who arrived in Berlin about the 27th of April in connection with final negotiations, in particular objected to the inclusion of Heramba Lal Gupta and stated that if he, and others like him, appeared in the Committee, the support of the Russian Soviet would be refused. The Soviet representative in Berlin confirmed Roy's statement. Chatto then wired to the Russian Government that he refused to be dictated to and threatened to break off negotiations. The result was a telegram from Chicherin himself to the effect that the Berlin Indian Committee might bring anyone they wished to the meeting at Moscow.

Incidentally, it is reported, there is no longer any doubt, that the Soviet are already financing the Indian Revolutionary movement. Every member who goes to Moscow meeting was to have his expenses paid, and was to receive a minimum 5,000 marks. Chatto has had all his debts paid (15,000 Swedish kronens). Dr. Hafiz has been given 10,000 kronens

as expenses for his wife and children. These payments have been made through the Soviet representative in Berlin.

While these difficulties were being overcome a series of preliminary meetings was held in Berlin in order to define the precise attitude the Committee should adopt, and to present a united programme to the Russian Government. This, however, after much discussion proved an impossible task. "The Friends of Freedom for India" in America, for instance, are ready to accept Russian help for a political revolution in India but they will not tolerate any Communist propaganda. The Ghadr Party of America, on the other hand, are in favour of Communism. In Berlin H. L. Gupta is against Communist propaganda, whereas B. N. Dutt is in favour of it. Barkatulla and the "Provisional Government of India" party are in favour of political revolution. M. N. Roy and his associates are out for purely Communistic work. These differences proved impossible to reconcile and it was decided that the first step should be to present a statement before the Soviet Government and the Executive of the Third International of the real position in India and thereafter as far as possible to follow their advice.

#### INDIANS IN EUROPE

**CHATTO'S GROUP :** The members of the Indian Committee were reported about the second week of May to be busy in securing passports and arranging details for their journey to Russia in view of the meeting of Indian revolutionaries in Moscow. A copy of a letter given by Chatto to fellow conspirator shows how matters were being arranged.

BERLIN C/O VICTOR KOPP  
3rd May 1921

Dear Comrade Vorovsky,

This is to introduce to you Mr.—who will shortly proceed to Moscow along with the Indian delegation to take part in the forthcoming congress.

He will perhaps bring with him two or three other Indian comrades, and I should be very much obliged if you give

them all the necessary help for their journey. It is extremely essential that they should reach Moscow in time for the Congress. Instructions with regard to their journey have already been wired from Moscow to the Legation here. We should be very much obliged if you would allow them to send their correspondence and reports through your courier, C/o Karakhan, Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

It is over two years now since I met you at your legation in Stockholm, and you were not in Moscow when I was there last winter. I hope that we shall meet again, either in Moscow or in Rome.

With comradely greetings,

Yours sincerely,

Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya.

To prevent mistakes, kindly consult bearer's passport.

N.B. Victor Kopp is the Soviet representative in Berlin. Vorovsky was at one time the representative of the Soviet Government in Stockholm.

It appears that H. L. Gupta is to remain in Berlin, where he will be in-charge of affairs during Chatto's absence. It has been suggested that the ultimate destination of all the Indians who are going to Moscow will be Afghanistan. This is possible, but it is clear that their movements after the Moscow Conference will depend on the decision arrived at by the Soviet Government and up to the present no information on this point has been received.

INDIANS IN BERLIN : The Berlin Indian Committee has recently been suffering from an epidemic of "Spy Mania". At their request Dalip Singh Gill has been imprisoned by the Soviet Government in Moscow. Dr. Mansur, who was formerly working with Dalip Singh Gill in Berlin is now being carefully watched though he is in other respects free. At present he is giving Hindustani lessons in Berlin.

Ram Bhattacharji in Berlin is also regarded as a spy and was brought to task by the Committee, and asked to clear himself. This he did by giving certain references and by showing that he had some of his teeth knocked out by the Indian



Police. Pending further enquiries the Committee will have nothing to do with him. S. K. Roy in Switzerland and Mookerji who attended the Baku Conference as an Indian delegate are also suspected and according to B. N. Dutta, Mookherji is to be shot at sight. Of lesser known individuals Varma and Kaul (not identical with P. N. Kaul) are also regarded as British spies. In Paris A. Ghosh is under strong suspicion.

The arrival of Agnes Smedley (of the F.F.I.) in Berlin has already been mentioned. It has now been ascertained that she made the journey from America by enlisting as a stewardess on an American Ship under the name of Miss Bird. On landing at Danzig the only document she could produce was a paper showing her as a stewardess. She then wired to B. N. Dutta who arranged with the Berlin Foreign Office that this paper should be visaed authorizing her to proceed to Berlin. Chatto has now managed to get her a German passport, and it is rumoured he proposes to marry her.

#### CHATTO'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIET

It is now possible to indicate the general trend of the negotiations which have taken place between the Berlin Indian Committee and Moscow. Chatto has unsuccessfully carried out his schemes for linking up the revolutionary centres in Europe. He is in touch with American groups, such as the Friends of Freedom for Indian, and has enlisted under his banner most of the prominent Indian seditionists in Europe, and he has formulated an ambitious plan of work which only requires money to be put into execution. Having reached this stage, his next step was to approach the Soviet Government, as the leader of the Indian Communist Party, for financial assistance. To investigate his claims and the representative nature of his Society, the Soviet Government sent an agent to Berlin early in March with a view to test Chatto's statement that his Society fully represented Indian opinion. The agent demanded a mandate signed by the well-known Indian leaders such as Gandhi, etc. Chatto could not produce the required mandate but he promised it would be shortly forthcoming and further argued, "If you could believe one man,

M. N. Roy, who has no mandate from Indians why should not you believe us—a Society ?”

[Note — Chatto is reported to have hit on the idea of utilizing his sister Mrs. Naidu to approach Indian leaders on her return to India, in order to obtain their signatures. Mahamed Ali in a recent speech, in which he alluded to the intention of Government to arrest him on some “absurd pretexts” and said that such a pretext might be a charge of conspiring with Bolsheviks through Mrs. Naidu.]

Ultimately it appears the agent was satisfied and promised to recognize Chatto’s organization and returned to Moscow having promised that he would send them 100,000 roubles. It was at this stage that Chatto wrote to one of his confederates explaining the situation, and the statement that Chatto had at last arranged for financial support from the Soviet, which appeared in a recent Weekly Report, was based on this letter. Later information, however, shows that negotiations have not yet been concluded.

In the third week of March a letter and telegram from Moscow was received by Chatto stating that it would be impossible to send the promised assistance as M. N. Roy stood in the way. Roy, it seems, advised the Soviet that Chatto’s group is a Nationalist Party and not a Communist Party. “They are the very people who were Nationalists at the time of the war for German money, now they have found Russian money and are Communists.” The Soviet agent stated that it was against communist principles to help Nationalists. After receiving this news the Indian Committee in Berlin were at a loss how to proceed, discussed innumerable plans which included a scheme for the murder of Roy. They were considering the advisability of going in a body to Russia and of making a final appeal for support when the agent of the Soviet Government returned to Berlin at the beginning of April.

At the date of latest information negotiations had been resumed. Chatto had wired to Abdul Wahid, B. N. Das Gupta and Dr. Hafiz, probably with a view to calling them to Berlin and possibly with the intention of taking them with him when he goes to Moscow.

The opposition of Roy is clearly responsible for the set back which Chatto has experienced in his negotiations with the Soviet. Information which we recently received stated that Roy's attitude has now been made clear, as he has made an offer of cooperation with the Indians in Berlin provided they accept his terms. The terms include strict adherence to communism and the acceptance of Roy as leader. It is the last condition which is responsible for hesitation to close with Roy's offer. Heramba Lal Gupta, in particular, who has much influence in the party, is absolutely opposed to working under Roy.

#### **D. EXPERIENCE OF DR. BHUPENDRANATH DUTTA IN MOSCOW**

*Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta, youngest brother of Swami Vivekananda, was one of the most active Indian revolutionaries outside India. When Berlin Committee was formed during the World War I to co-ordinate the activities of Indian Revolutionaries outside India and to secure German arms and assistance to organise armed resistance against British Government in India in order to attain India's independence, Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta was elected as Secretary of the Berlin Committee. As Secretary, Dr. Dutta was the Chief Executive of the Berlin Committee which was given the status of an Emigré Government by the Government of Germany. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, younger brother of Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, an Indian revolutionary of outstanding merit and reputation, was a pillar of the Berlin Committee and due to his efforts Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta could become the Secretary of the Berlin Committee.*

*The October Revolution in Russia in 1917 fired the imagination of the leaders of the Berlin Committee and they were gradually attracted towards Marxist ideology and became eager to make contacts with the leaders of the October Revolution. But their sole aim was 'independence'*

of India. After Germany's defeat in World War I there was a turmoil in the Governmental set-up in Germany and consequently the leaders of the Berlin Committee faced great uncertainties. In the subsequent period Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and other leaders of the Berlin Committee established contacts with Bolshevik Party and the Communist International and also paid a visit to Moscow.

Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta gave an account of their experience in Moscow in his book (in Bengali), entitled: "*Aprakasita Rajnitik Itihash*." Some relevant excerpts from this book are given here (in English Translation) for the readers to make their own assessment of these historical facts.

### **Aprakasita Rajnitik Itihash \***

"The Russian revolution had stirred the minds of Indian revolutionaries living in Europe. Some of them were aligned to Left-Socialist ideas before that. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Trimul Acharya were members of the Communist-Anarchist Party in Paris. The writer (i.e., Dr. Bhupendranath dutta) in his student days became a member of the Bronxpark Socialist Club in New York. Madame Cama was left-minded. I heard that she was sympathetic to Russian Bolshevik ideology. In 1925, when the writer (i.e., Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta) departed from her in Paris, she said to this writer (i.e. Dr. Dutta) mixed in English and French : "keep your flag high like Admiral Togo and organise the *ouvriers et paysans* of India." The French Socialist leader Jaures and Longuet, the grandson of Karl Marx, were their friends. The Indian revolutionaries while staying abroad received support only from the leftists of Europe. The Socialist leader, Hyndman, of England, the Russian Anarchist leader Peter Krapatkin, the Bolshevik leader Lenin - all of them wanted independence of India.

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\* Excerpts from '*Aprakasita Rajnitik Itihash*' (Unpublished Political History)

So, when one of them established a new state order through revolution, was it not natural that all left-minded persons would go there ? For this reason the vision of all types of revolutionaries was fixed on Moscow. Then Moscow was known as "New Mecca."

"The new Revolution of Russia had greatly influenced the minds of left-minded Indian revolutionaries. Of the Indian revolutionaries, who were aligned to Moscow, had convened a conference in Stockholm in 1920 and decided their course of action. The writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta), Pandurang Khankhoje—who came from Iran, Birendranath Das Gupta and Biswamitra—an Indian student staying in Denmark, assembled there. After discussion, it was decided that : those who wanted to remain Nationalist-minded they should form an organisation and start work : and, those who were left-minded i.e., those who believed in the Communist ideology—would form a separate organisation to start work but both the groups would struggle for India's independence. This programme of action was intimated to Gadar Party in America. The expenses for this conference were borne by the Sweedish Communist leader, Strome. We also met the Communist leaders of Sweden. They said that they could not do anything from there and we should go to Moscow for necessary arrangement. So, it was decided to send Virendranath Chattopadhyaya to Moscow. Before this conference M.N. Roy had also invited Virendranath to Moscow."

"In the winter of 1920 Chattopadhyaya went to Moscow and returned after discussions with the leaders there. The leaders of the Communist International told him there : "You bring other (Indian) revolutionaries here, form a Committee and start work." He (Chattopadhyaya) also agreed to bring other (Indian) revolutionaries to Moscow and on this understanding returned to Berlin."

"During this time Borodin returned to Berlin. The writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta) introduced him to Chattopadhyaya. He (i.e., Boradin) said : "In the meantime you start work in Berlin after forming a Committee and arrange to establish the Communist International's contact with India."

"Before this development i.e., before Chattopadhyaya's departure for Moscow the writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta) received a letter from him from Stockholm containing information that one young man named Ghulam Ambia Lohani was on his way to Moscow via Berlin and arrangement for his stay in Berlin had to be made. As far as I remember Chattopadhyaya got the name of this youngman from his sister Shrimati Sarojini Naidu ..... A few days after receipt of this letter one lame young man reached the writer's residence at Ansbro-kher Street (in Berlin). After acquaintance he said that he hailed from Pabna district (now in Bangladesh-Ed.); he came to study law in London and was on his way to Moscow. He secured his passage money from the Soviet Embassy in London. Later on, after staying with him for a few years the writer came to know all about him. In London he lived a fast life and all along lived like that. He had earlier studied at Aligarh (University) for some time before. He had married a French woman in London but at that time he had no connection with her. He was a very intelligent person and could speak English well."

"The Indian Revolutionary committee was set up in Berlin as proposed by Borodin. Lohani reached Berlin after this and Chattopadhyaya also returned from Moscow. Chattopadhyaya wanted to include Lohani in the group that would visit Moscow..."

"During this time one evening a young woman came to the writer's (i. e., Dr. Dutta's) place and asked him : 'Are you Mr. Dutta? Thereafter she introduced herself as Agnes Smedley. She was engaged in Indian revolutionary work in New York in association with Taraknath Das and Sailendranath Ghosh and faced imprisonment for four years along with them. When Taraknath Das and others were penniless she supported them from her earnings."

After the First World War she was a front-ranking worker of the organisation, "Friends of Indian Freedom." She was acquainted with all the Indian revolutionaries living in U. S. A. The Indians did not see any woman so devoted to India

like her except Sister Nivedita. She was born in a poor worker's family in Pennsylvania in U.S.A. She was a stenographer and also a journalist. Her articles were published in the *Modern Review*, the monthly journal published from Calcutta....."

"At last all of us started for Moscow. Chattopadhyya, Agnes Smedley and Khankoje went together. Nalini Gupta was also taken to Moscow. The writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta) and Birendranath Das Gupta went separately. Except Nalini Gupta we all were members of the "Indian Revolutionary Committee."

"On reaching Moscow the writer (i.e. Dr. Dutta) again met Borodin. Borodin told Chattopadhyya : "I suggested formation of Indian Revolutionary Committee (in Berlin) so as to delay your visit to Moscow and advised you to start work in Berlin." Its meaning was understood by us subsequently. The writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta) again met Borodin. Borodin said : "You have come ; stay here for six months; you will meet everybody. This is how we work here." Subsequently it was learnt that he (i.e., Borodin) advised some one of our group : "You hold a conference with Mahendra Pratap and others and form a Committee."

"On reaching Moscow the members of the Berlin Committee met Acharya and Peshwari. Roy was then in Tashkent. Subsequently he (Roy) and Abani returned to Moscow with their wives and a few Muzahareens. In the mean time the writer (i. e. Dr. Dutta) met Sabitsky, Office Secretary of the Communist International, and told him : "We are waiting here so long but nothing is progressing." He (Sabitsky) replied : "Let Roy return, then a Commission will be set up and programme of work will be decided." Before this discussion we had the impression that we came to Russia as Members of the Indian Revolutionary Committee of Berlin. In this regard he (Sabitsky) said : "We attach no value to this Committee." During this time Chattopadhyya and Agnes Smedley declared themselves as husband and wife according to the social practice of the Communists.

At last a Commission started its work to finalise the programme of work. Borodin, Koeltch, Rutgers and all Indians assembled here. Rutgers was the President of this Commission. He asked all members of the Indian Team individually to give his opinion.

But Chattopadhyaya said : "We belong to one party. One member representing the whole party will give the opinion." In reply Borodin said : " we do not know any party; we will select the appropriate person after scrutiny." Its implication was that they would select their 'own person' according to their choice. The members of the Berlin Committee said : "Then we will boycott this Commission....."

Thereafter, three months elapsed. No new Commission was set up. Subsequently Rakosi became the Secretary of a Commission and started work promptly. He convened the meeting of the new Commission to decide the programme of action for the Indian Revolutionaries. Rakosi was well-known to Nalini Gupta. On his way to Moscow Nalini was a co-passenger with Rakosi in a Steamer. Nalini informed the writer (i.e. Dr. Dutta) that Rakosi said : "I am not concerned either with Roy's group or with Dutta's group : I will assemble both the groups and form a Party."

The members of Chattopadhyaya's group started propagating : "There is no scope to organise workers movement in India, only nationalist movement should be organised." They propagated this theory to the delegates of all countries. This created division in the party. Subsequently when a Commission was set up under the Chairmanship of James Beles all Indian Revolutionaries assembled there. On finding Borodin in this meeting chattopadhyaya asked the President, "In what capacity he (Borodin) was there." The President replied : "He is present here as a member of the Commission." Chattopadhyaya then said : "If it is so, I will boycott this Commission." The President ignored this threat. Chattopadhyaya left the meeting. At that time Borodin asked one of the Indians : " In what capacity you have joined this Commission—as an individual or as a member of the party?"



He replied : "As an individual." In this Commission a thesis of Roy which he had already printed and sent to the International, was distributed. The thesis of this writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta) and of his companions was also placed in the meeting along with a thesis of Chattopadhyaya." Chattopadhyaya sent his thesis to Lenin. Lenin gave him a reply.

"Dear Comrade Chattopadhyaya,

I have read your Thesis. I am in agreement with your views. We will have to destroy British imperialism. When I can meet you will be conveyed to you by my Secretary.

*Sd/- V. Ulianov (Lenin)"\**

The writer (i.e., Dr. Dutta) sent his thesis to Lenin through Rakosi. Lenin gave the following reply :

"To

Comrade Bhupendranath Datta,

Dear Comrade Datta,

I have read your Thesis. We should not discuss about the Social classes. I think we should abide by my Thesis on colonial question. Gather statistical facts about Peasants' League if they exist in India.

Yours,

V. Ulianov (Lenin)"

The contention of the writer's thesis was : So long as the foreign power was ruling over us, We should unite all classes of people and try to complete the Political Revolution. In this connection Marx's "Civil War in France" was referred to and views of Marx were quoted. But from the very beginning Communist Party should be organised which, after the Political Revolution, should strive for Socialist Revolution to establish Socialism in India.

"The members of the different Indian groups were in this Commission. James Beles was the President of this Committee and he was representing the Communist International. Besides, Borodin, Trionosky, Dr. Thalheimer and Rakosy,

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\* (Translation from Bengali version)

Secretary of the Communist International were in this Commission. Dr. Thalheimer was the Editor of the German Communist Party's organ, "FREIHEIT."

"The Commission sat for two days. On the first day Lohani read his thesis. Khankhoje said "If you want to form a Communist Party, do it ; if you want to organise working class movement, do it." On the second day the members of our group were to read the thesis. The writer (i.e. Dr. Dutta) said, "I have sent a copy of my thesis to Lenin. This thesis is quite lengthy, for this reason I am reading the gist of it." While reading the thesis the writer referred to the writings of Karl Marx a number of times. On noticing it Dr. Thalheimer commented in jest ; "Our Indian Comrades have read too much of Karl Marx." During this time Borodin asked me, "Where is the difference between your's and Roy's views?" The writer (Dr. Dutta) said in reply : "Roy is unwilling to work with the nationalists. In the revolutionary movement in India whom one will find except the nationalists?" On hearing it Borodin said : "It is correct." At last Agnes Smedley placed her brief comments on India to the President of the Commission instead of reading it. On reading it Beles (Chairman of the Commission) asked her : "Comrade, being a member of IWW how could you be such an English-hater?" Finally Roy stood up and said : "There is a proposal to form a new Communist Party (for India). But Communist Party of India has already been formed. Why not these Comrades join this Party ?" As soon as Roy said it, the members of the writer's (Dr. Dutta) group protested against it and put up a typerwritten protest letter to Rakosi. It was written in this protest letter : "We all Communist-minded people want to form a Communist Party of India. We have sent message to our country accordingly and preparations are going on in this direction. But suddenly without informing us a Communist Party of India was formed in Moscow.\* We do not recognise this Party and we are not willing to give any co-operation to it."

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\* It is actually "Tashkent".

On hearing this report everyone who had come from Germany became unwilling to stay in Moscow any longer. All of them wanted to return back.

Finally the Time came to leave Moscow. The writer (Dr. Dutta) went to meet Roy and his wife. Roy told him (Dr. Dutta) : "You stay here and take responsibility for all work. Do not feel sorry for my victory." The wirter (Dr. Dutta) said in reply : " Roy, it is not true. Neither have you won, nor am I defeated. It is the mandate of Malibureau that a small bureau will be set up in Moscow. Now you make your career here. I make my career elsewhere." Then Roy said: "The world is big enough for everybody."

## **Formation of Communist Party of India in Tashkent in 1920**

### **A. M. N. ROY'S VERSION ON THE FORMATION OF COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA IN TASHKENT\***

The destitute Indian religious emigres were brought to Tashkent. It was not easy to house, feed and clothe them there. Everything was scarce in the capital of the new-founded Turkestan Republic. The first difficulty was to find a house which could accommodate more than fifty people. Having received the news of the coming of the Indian "comrades," the Turk-Bureau of the Communist International had found a suitable house with the help of the Turkestan Government. In the modern part of the city, there was no large enough house. The house for the Indian emigres was between the modern part and the old part of the city. It was a one-storey building with a large number of rooms of all shapes and sizes. It was still winter. Already at Bokhara the Indian emigres had been provided with warm clothing. Each was given a uniform of the Red Army soldier. The long brown coat was quite warm. Yet, some arrangement had to be made for heating the house, at least for another month or so. Fuel was the scarcest commodity of all, and to heat a big house required a considerable quantity. To obtain that, a special permit of the Government had to be secured, and no lesser official than the Commissar of Supplies could issue the permit. The now famous Lazar Kaganovitch was the official to be approached. I thought of seeing him personally so as to make it sure that the permit for the precious commodity would be obtained soon. But my secretary-interpreter—a Russian jew who had lived long in America—felt

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\* Excerpt from : Memoirs of M. N. Roy, 1964 edition, Pages : 459-467

that it would not be quite proper. In the official hierarchy I held a position higher up than the Commissar of Supplies. The Secretary said that a letter from me would be enough, and he would go with it. I asked him to draft the letter in Russian, and he produced a tearful document describing all the suffering of the Indian comrades, and how they would freeze if the house was not heated properly. I asked if it was necessary to write all that. He replied, "Yes, some agitation is necessary to move the Commissar."

My Secretary went off with the letter as drafted by him, and within a couple of hours returned triumphantly with the permit, not only for fuel, but also for a pair of "valniki" (thick high felt boots worn in Russia during the winter) for each Indian comrade. He also brought a message from the Commissar, that the Indian comrades would be provided with everything necessary to make them comfortable, and that I would only have to ring him up, and the required commodities would be delivered promptly.

Before long, two truckloads of wood arrived, and several tall white porcelain tile stoves in the house were lit. There followed a scramble for the warmest room. Anticipating that many similar difficulties would follow, I suggested that three from amongst the emigres should be chosen to constitute a House Committee to supervise the allotment of rooms, and also the provision of food for them all. There were several fairly educated young men in the crowd. I selected three of them and recommended them for the Committee. They readily agreed with my suggestion that, in the allotment of rooms, preference should be given to those not in good health and also to the aged. There were actually several gray beards who had joined the crusade for the defence of the Khilafat. It was a miracle that they had survived the hardships of their journey over the snow-peaked Hindukush. It was also agreed that cots should be provided only to the aged and those in indifferent health. It was impossible to secure cots for all. anyhow. But large woollen carpets were secured to cover the floors, and on the whole the guests were fairly comfortable.

Feeding arrangements were also quite satisfactory—one meal consisted of what was called pilaf, no worse than eaten in my residence or in that of any other high party or State official. The evening meal was composed of *lepioshka* (thick but well-baked unleavened bread known in Northern India as *nan*) and some meat preparation, usually *shashlik* (Shik Kabab). In between, in the morning and in the afternoon, apple tea with raisins (in lieu of sugar) was also supplied. It was not a very luxurious board, as expected from oriental hospitality. But none in those days got anything better, and most of the guests were not accustomed to anything better at home. Nevertheless, before long, there was grumbling, and articulate complaints. Except for the minority of the educated, the rest of the lot felt that they were obliging us by accepting our hospitality. The House Committee spared me the trouble of listening to unreasonable complaints and trying to do the impossible. As a matter of fact, about a dozen young men of the company proved to be very helpful.

Presently, the time came when we had to broach the question of the purpose of bringing the Indian emigrants to Tashkent. At Bokhara most of them were attracted by the hope of receiving military training. They believed that after a short sojourn in Tashkent, they would all be sent home with plenty of arms and money to fight the British. But we had to decide the nature of training according to the competence of the recruits. It would be easy enough to teach all of them how to shoot a gun or even to handle some more complicated weapons. It would also not be difficult to satisfy their expectation of going back to India with arms. But the question was: what would most of them do with their guns, and whom would they fight, and for what ideal?

They had left India with the purpose of fighting for the Khilafat. Most of them were not even nationalists. They were anti-British, but had no idea of what would happen when the British were driven out of India. So it was felt that a measure of elementary political training was necessary before the majority of the emigrants could be armed. The plan was not

to convert them to Communism, but to awaken in them the minimum measure of political consciousness. They might be easily persuaded to abandon the slogan "Khilafat Zindabad" for the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad." But they should have some idea of revolution, and how it would be brought about. And for that purpose, first of all they should become loyal soldiers of the revolution. Then we were thinking in terms of a national democratic revolution. But if most of the emigrants were not nationalists, none of them had any idea of democracy.

I discussed those difficulties with the educated minority of the group. After some persuasion, they agreed with my proposal that the emigrants should receive a course of political training before a military school for training the soldiers of the Indian Revolution could be founded. Arms were easily available. As a matter of fact, I had come to Tashkent with a large quantity of them. But there was no possibility of sending them farther on nearer to India. We did not want the Indian emigrants to be Communists. But if they were to be armed, we wanted to be sure that the arms would not be turned against us.

It was quite clear that, before we could proceed to do anything fruitful with the emigrants, the educated minority should be differentiated from the fanatical mass. So, to begin with, I set myself to the task of politically educating the educated few. Most of them responded quite satisfactorily, although a few turned out to be very refractory. I was very much surprised to find that a few of the educated young men were more fanatical than the emigrant mass. Curiously enough, one of them eventually became an equally fanatical Communist. He is still living somewhere in Pakistan, although it is reported that he has left, or has been expelled from, the Communist Party. He was a pathological case—distrustful of everything and fanatically religious. Another, a somewhat more elderly person who claimed to have been closely associated with Mohammad Ali, was a more deliberate trouble-maker. On the strength of his supposed association with the leader of the Indian Khilafat Movement, he commanded the confidence of the group and

could sway them as he liked. He is also alive, and it is reported that he holds a high position in Pakistan.

My closer relation with the educated few aroused suspicion and resentment among the rest. The latter of the two mentioned before took advantage of that situation, and carried on a whispering campaign that I was trying to convert them to Communism. An educated few among them had actually been so converted. There was a terrible uproar, but the trouble-maker was a very skilful intriguer, and could not be detected easily. The tense situation came to a head when one day the majority of the group demanded that the meat given to them should be from sheep slaughtered in their presence. They suspected that they might be given meat which Mussalmans were not allowed to eat. It was a groundless suspicion, because in those days no pigs were easily available in Turkestan. But the excited fanatics would not listen. When the House Committee, assisted by the other educated few, tried to explain the position, they were denounced as Kafirs who would be driven out of the house if they continued their objectionable activity. It was an embarrassing position. I would not have minded throwing the majority of the lot out into the streets because no good was ever likely to come out of them anyway. But the Russians were very sensitive about the "Indian comrades" and advised me to be patient and persistent. On my replying that my patience was exhausted by the unruly fanatics and that I did not believe that further perseverance would produce any result, the Russian comrades suggested that the President of the Turkestan Republic, who was a Muslim, should visit the boarding house and talk to the Indian comrades. The President himself was a young man, who wore European clothes and kept no beard. However, his visit did make an impression; after all, he was the head of the government!

After the visit, he sympathised with my difficulties and offered to help. He was also of the opinion that nothing could be done with most of the Indian emigrants, and suggested that we should select only the hopeful few and



tell the rest to go out and earn a living, on the ground that in a Communist State none could have bread unless he worked. He offered to provide employment for those who would be willing to work. Of course, his advice could not be accepted, and it had to be kept a strictly guarded secret.

Meanwhile, I went ahead with the political training of the educated few, barring the couple of mischievous ones. To pacify them, the ignorant majority was allowed to go out and roam in the bazar. That was a risky procedure, because even Tashkent was full of enemy spies in those days. They could take advantage of the disaffection of the Indian emigrants, and with a little money purchase their services. Before long, it was discovered that the apprehension was not unfounded, and I was placed in the delicate situation of dealing with suspected enemy agents as they were dealt with in those days in Russia. My position was delicate because the Russians would not do anything against the "Indian comrades."

My preliminary efforts with the educated minority produced greater results than I expected and wanted. Most of them transferred their fanatical allegiance from Islam to Communism. I had not spoken to them at all about Communism. I only told them that driving the British out of India would be no revolution, if it was succeeded by replacing foreign exploiters by native ones. I had to explain the social significance of a revolution: that, to be worthwhile, a revolution should liberate the toiling masses of India from their present economic position. Instinctively idealists, they readily agreed with my opinion and jumped to the conclusion that, if the revolution was to liberate the toiling masses, it would have to be a Communist revolution. I was surprised when some of them approached me with the proposal that they wanted to join the Communist Party. Others enquired why we should not found the Communist Party of India there and then. Their enthusiasm was very well meant. Although some of them had a utilitarian motive, I could not discourage them.

Presently, they were reinforced by the arrival of a small group which called itself Communists already at Kabul. It

was led by an old gray-bearded Maulana, Abdur Rub, and a South Indian Hindu named Acharya. On their arrival, they were accommodated in the emigrants' house and expected to have special attention and privileges owing to their professed political faith. I would have welcomed the advent of even a few clever and convinced Communists to help me deal with a rather difficult situation. But after some conversation I discovered that Abdur Rub was an impostor, and Acharya was an anarchist, if he was anything. But the educated minority of the earlier emigrants were easily influenced by Abdur Rub and Acharya, who fanned their Communist fanaticism.

The result of a new crisis in the emigrants' house was that some of the inmates began talking about communism openly and went to the extent of making disparaging remarks about their fanatical past, which was still present with most of the other. Occasionally, it came to fierce altercations and even exchange of blows. To maintain order and to protect the minority, we had to post some armed guards near the house. On the other hand, the minority, which proposed the formation of an Indian Communist Party, was reinforced by the Abdur Rub-Acharya group and, on the latter's instigation, sent a delegation to the Turk-Bureau of the Communist International to plead their case. I tried to argue with them that there was no hurry. They should wait until they returned to India. There was no sense in a few emigrant individuals calling themselves the Communist Party. They were evidently disappointed, and I apprehended that the experience might dishearten them. I needed their help to manage the refractory majority of the emigrants. The idea of turning them out with the offer of employment was not practical. So I agreed with the proposal of the formation of a Communist Party, knowing fully well that it would be a nominal thing, although it could function as the nucleus of a real Communist Party to be organised eventually. An intelligent and fairly educated young man named Mohammad Safiq, who had come

from Kabul with the Acharya group, was elected secretary of the party.(\*)

The party was formed. But what should be its activity? A Communist Party must work among the masses. India was far away. The Indian masses could not be reached from where we were. But I pointed out that in the emigrant group we had a cross-section of the Indian masses. On return to India, the pioneering Communists would have to face the political backwardness, general ignorance and religious fanaticism of the masses. So they had better serve their apprenticeship by endeavouring to influence the cross-section of the Indian masses within our reach. They agreed and it was decided that they should try to persuade the rest of the emigrants to attend a series of general political talks preparatory to their admission to the proposed military school. The members of the communist group were to deliver those talks. Apart from Mohammad Safiq, two others proved to be quite efficient. One was Shaukat Usmani. He was a graduate of some Indian University and quite intelligent. But he was the most fanatical of all and stuck to his guns till the bitter end. As he was known among the emigrants to be a devout Mussalman, his talks were readily attended and began to have influence. The other was Abdullah Safder. In India he used to teach Urdu to British army officers on the Frontier, but he himself hardly knew any English. But being a professional teacher, he was also quite successful in his talks. Usmani returned to India several years later and became an important member of the Communist Party. He was an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Safder went to Moscow and graduated from the Communist University for the Toilers of the East. Then he received higher education in Marxist Theory at the Institute of Red Professors. He also came back to India eventually and lived underground. In the earlier part of the Second World War he left India with the object of returning to Russia. I have had no news of what happened to him thereafter.

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\* M. N. Roy did not give further details about formation of Communist Party of India in Tashkent.

The central theme of the talks delivered in the emigrants' house was that they must soon return to India to fight for her liberation. But a few of them, even if supplied with arms, would not be able to make a revolution. For that purpose, they must win over thousands and thousands of others like themselves. Therefore, before returning to India they must learn what they would tell them to win them over for the revolution. Once that preliminary training was imparted, they would be admitted to the Military Schools to receive training in the use of all sorts of arms and when, on return to India, they would have enlisted the support of many others for the revolution, plenty of arms would be sent to them.

The talks, delivered by several of their own fellow-religionists, did not mention the word "Communism" nor made any disrespectful reference to religion, which pacified the recalcitrant lot, and the atmosphere in the India House (that was how the emigrants' house was called) became quiet. The idea of being trained in the use of arms seemed to have been attractive.

Shortly thereafter, a Military School was founded. The group of Russian officers who had accompanied me from Moscow was still in Tashkent. To them was entrusted the organisation of the school. John, the American Wobbly, was appointed the Commandant of the School. He was to look after the discipline. Having looked over his wards, he sarcastically remarked: "We are going to train not an army of revolution, but an army of God."

## **B. FORMATION OF COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA IN TASHKENT IN 1920 \***

The foregoing extract is from M. N. Roy's original English text. The extract shows that the *muhajir* (self-exiled) youths who had emigrated to Tashkent in 1920 compelled M. N. Roy to lay there the foundation of the Communist Party of

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\* Excerpts from Muzaffar Ahmad's Memoirs : "Myself and the Communist Party of India", pages : 45-56





India. This idea created by his *Memoirs* would have remained firmly planted in our minds, had not new facts come to light meanwhile. Most of the *muhajirs* who became members of the Communist Party of India in Tashkent and in Moscow are dead. Of those who are still alive, we may, if we try, get in touch with only Comrade Rafiq Ahmad of Bhopal. He also is seventy (1967). Others who are still living live in Pakistan. To us Pakistan today is not only an alien country but a remote one too.

I will never say that M. N. Roy was not asked some time or other by the *muhajir* youths in Tashkent to form the Communist Party of India. But we now possess evidence that far from doing what he claims in his writing to have done in founding the Party in Tashkent, Roy actually did the reverse. It was M. N. Roy himself, not the *muhajir* youths, who took the real initiative in founding the Communist Party of India in Tashkent.

### **Dr. Devendra Kaushik's Discovery in Tashkent**

Shri Devendra Kaushik, M. A., Ph. D., is a Reader in History in the University of Kurukshetra. After obtaining a doctorate in History from the University of Agra, he became a Ph.D. also of the Lenin University of Uzbekistan in the Soviet Union for his researches on *The Leninist Nationalist Policy in Central Asia*. He had to stay in Tashkent for three years for the purpose. He has told me that it was in Tashkent that he first read my book *The Communist Party of India and Its Formation Abroad* and felt a desire to see the places where the *muhajirs* lived. He also enquired whether any documents of the period of the *muhajirs'* stay in Taskent were available or not. As a result of his investigations, he found a file (F. 60, ed. No. 724, L. 1-14) in the Archives of the Communist Party of Uzebekistan. In fact, the Keeper of the Archives himself had searched out this file for Dr Kaushik. Dr Kaushik discovered some valuable documents relating to the Communist Party of India in the file. Dr Kaushik, I believe, could little expect that he would come by several documents of such

value. The file under reference contained the following documents :

- (i) very brief minutes of the meeting in Tashkent in which the Indian Communist Party was first formed;
- (ii) brief minutes of a subsequent meeting of the newly-formed Indian Communist Party;
- (iii) a letter to the Communist Party of Turkestan communicating the news of the formation of the Indian Communist Party in Tashkent.

[In 1920 this Party was called the Communist Party of Turkestan. Turkestan had not yet been reconstituted into a number of republics under different names.]

I am reproducing below the text of all three documents found by Dr Kaushik :

(1)

“Formed the Indian Communist Party in Tashkent on Oct. 17, 1920, with the following members

- 1. M. N. Roy
- 2. Evelina Trent Roy
- 3. A. Mukherjee
- 4. Rosa Fitingof
- 5. Mohd Ali (Ahmed Hasan)
- 6. Mohd Shafiq Siddiqui and
- 7. Acharya, M. Prativadi Bayankar

The period for probation for candidate members would be three months.

Mohd Shafiq is elected Secretary.

The Indian Communist Party adopts the principles proclaimed by the Third International and undertakes to work out a programme adopted to the Indian condition.

(Sd.) President : M. Acharya

(Sd.) M. N. Roy, Secretary

(2)

“Further, in the Party Archives, Tashkent, are given the



minutes of a subsequent meeting held on December 15, 1920. It reads as follows :

Resolved to admit Abdul Qadir Sehrai, Masud Ali Shah Kazi and Akbar Shah as candidate members.

An Executive Committee of Roy, Shafiq and Acharya is elected.

(3)

“Also preserved among the documents is a communication sent by Roy to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan. It has been signed by Roy as the Secretary concerned. (The Russian term is ‘otvestvenny secretar’). There is another signature also thereupon which is illegible. Roy signed in bold letters in Russian in red ink. It reads as under :

“This is to state that the Communist Party of India has been organized here. It is working in conformity with the principles of the Third International under the political guidance of the Turkestan Bureau of the Comintern.”

None of the seven members with whom the Communist Party of India was first formed in Tashkent on October 17, 1920, belonged to the *muhajir* youths who had emigrated from India to Turkestan that year; yet Manabendranath writes that it was because of their obstinacy that he proceeded to build the Communist Party. Evelina Trent Roy, one of the seven members, was Manabendranath's first and American wife. Rosa Fitingof was Abani Mukherjee's Russian wife. Muhammad Ali had left India in 1915, while a student in the Medical College in Lahore. he had also declared himself to be a Communist much earlier. Mohammad Shafiq also was not one of the *muhajir* emigrants of 1920. He had left India in 1919, for political reasons. Acharya had left India in 1908. Narendranath Bhattacharyya alias Manabendranath Roy, and Abani Mukherjee had left India in 1915.

At the time of writing his *Memoirs*, Roy could not even dream that the brief minutes relating to the formation of the Communist Party of India in Tashkent would not remain

hidden in the Archives of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and would one day be discovered by a person named Dr Devendra Kaushik. Now necessity knows no law, and M. N. Roy was compelled by necessity to take the initiative in founding the Communist Party of India in Tashkent. He attend the Second Congress of the Communist International as a delegate of the Communist Party of Mexico, but the affection and appreciation he received in Congress was due to his being an Indian. Even after the Congress he was put in charge of work in the Eastern countries, especially India. At that time there was not the slightest possibility of a Communist Party being formed in India in the near future, and Roy had left Mexico once for all. At various places Roy had written that he was his own representative in the Communist International and went to Moscow at the invitation of Lenin. All this claim of his is just empty self-glorification. It is true that Lenin invited Roy to Moscow on the basis of Borodin's report, but Roy did not go there with empty hands. He went there on the advice of Borodin, his patron, as delegate of the Mexican Communist Party just formed. All this is recorded in Roy's *Memoirs*. It was in Mexico that Borodin had impressed upon Roy that representatives of Communist Parties only (although the name Communist Party was not essential) could hold any office of high responsibility in the Communist International. With the Third Congress of the Communist International drawing near, Roy had to found the Communist Party of India in Tashkent; otherwise, what could have been his *locus standi* there ? Whom could he represent ?

But what I fail to understand altogether is why among the seven founding members, there was not even a single *muhajir* emigrant of 1920. It was these *muhajirs* who were likely to become members of the Communist Party of India in Tashkent or in Moscow afterwards. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the presence of the *muhajirs* in Tashkent at the time was a windfall for Roy. Three of the *muhajirs* of 1920 were admitted as candidate members at a Party meeting on

December 15, 1920; but two of them, Abdul Qadir Sehrai (Khan) and Masood Ali Shah, were questionable characters.

### Who were Acharya and Abdur Rab ?

It was in Tashkent that M. N. Roy's relations with Maulavi Abdur Rab and M. Prativadi Bayankar Acharya became strained. In his *Memoirs* Roy dismisses Maulavi Abdur Rab as an 'imposter' and Acharya as an 'anarchist'. Some information about them should be given here. Maulavi ABDUR RAB belonged probably to the district of Peshawar, for he is referred to also as Abdur Rab Peshawari. As far as I have been able to gather, he was a linguist, a good speaker and a scholar. He was a high official of the British Government, probably in the diplomatic service. The *Makran Gazetteer* was compiled from material gathered by Abdur Rab. Makran was situated in the Kalat section of Beluchistan; it was not an easily accessible place. Once a man had been there, the terrible experience of the place would haunt his memory like a constant nightmare. In the introduction to the *Gazetteer*, it is written :

"In the present work an endeavour has been made to collate whatever published information is available and to supplement it with material gleaned from the country itself. For this purpose one of our Gazetteer assistants, Maulavi Abdur Rab, was deputed to Makran, where he spent 14 months in investigating actual conditions *in Situ* during 1903-4, and I am indebted to him for the local material included in this work." (*Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series*, vol. vii MAKRAN, by R. Hughes-Buller, I. C. S., Bombay, 1906, p. iv.)

Mr R. Hughes-Buller, I. C. S., editor of the *Gazetteer*, has acknowledged his debt to Maulavi Abdur Rab for spending fourteen months in Makran during 1903-4 and collecting local material for the *Makran Gazetteer*.

I do not know in which places and on what sort of assignments Maulavi Abdur Rab was employed in the following few years. It is found in Dr Bhupendranath Datta's *Aprakasita Rajnaitik Itihas* (1953) (Unpublished Political

History) that in 1914—at the beginning of World War I—he was a high official in the British Embassy at Baghdad. The British closed down the embassy and left Baghdad after the Turks had sided with Germany and against the British. But they left Mualavi Abdur Rab behind in the hope that he would take advantage of his being a Muslim to smuggle information to the British. But Abdur Rab did nothing of the sort : he sided straight with Turkey, and, consequently, with Germany. I believe that this was the first time Abdur Rab embroiled himself in anti-British politics. After the war he was seen in Angora, Afghanistan and in 1919 in the Soviet Union also.

Now I shall tell something about ACHARYA of South India. His name is recorded as Mandayam Parthasarathi Tirumalai Acharya in the police report in our country. But he signed his name as M. Prativadi Bayankar Acharya in the Party meeting on October 17, 1920. Originally, the Acharyas had been inhabitants of Mysore, but for many years members of the family had been domiciled in Madras. I do not know whether Mr Acharya came in contact or not with any revolutionary party in his student days in India. He became involved in politics in 1908, when he went to London probably for studies. He became a fellow-worker of Virendranath Chattopadhyaya's at that time. In France also, he and Chattopadhyaya both together came in contact with the Anarcho-Communist Party. He had toured Europe and America. As far as it can be surmised, the first time he made the acquaintance of Abdur Rab and became also his friend was during World War I. They were seen together in Afghanistan. They went to Russia in 1919, long before M. N. Roy visited the country. They also met Lenin in 1919.

It is easy to see why M. N. Roy dubbed Acharya an 'anarchist'. In 1920, during the Second Congress of the Communist International, Acharya might have himself told Roy that he had come into contact with the anarchists in Europe : or Roy might have received this information from some other person. But Roy has not written a single word

about why he has dismissed Abdur Rab as an impostor. Before giving him this bad name Roy should have given, at least, some hints as to where and how he had practised imposture. I have heard that disgraced as he was in the Soviet Union, Acharya returned with a Russian wife to Germany. There he turned again towards his former anarchism and described himself then as an 'Anarcho-Syndicalist' and 'a member of the Fourth International'. Is it because of Acharya then that the name of the Fourth International is heard in Mysore and some parts of South India? Towards the end of his life, Acharya returned to India and lived in Bombay. I heard (in 1967) that he had died.

In Tashkent in 1920, and later possibly in Moscow also, the names of Acharya and Abdur Rab were spoken of together by the *muhajirs*. It appears that the two friends became estranged. Manabendranath had dismissed Acharya as an 'anarchist', but it is found that when he founded the Communist Party of India in Tashkent, he included Acharya, but left out Abdur Rab. This shows that Roy succeeded, at least temporarily, in freeing Acharya of his ties with Abdur Rab. Roy's character is indeed worth studying.

It is necessary to study the character of Abdur Rab also. What I have gathered from documents shows that Abdur Rab was not a religious fanatic. He was also not a staunch Khilafatist. In my book *The Communist Party of India and Its Formation Abroad*, I have given an account of the journey of Rafiq Ahmad of Bhopal, as told by him to me. It was not possible for me to take down all that he said; besides, the account in that case would have become much longer. Rafiq Ahmad told me a lot about Abdur Rab also at that time, but I have written very little, rather nothing, about all that. Moreover, there were many things about Abdur Rab which Rafiq Ahmad did not know. Recently (in 1967), Rafiq Ahmad wrote to me from Bhopal again about Abdur Rab. now I feel that it is necessary to give here some extracts from the account given by Rafiq Ahmad about Abdur Rab. Rafiq Ahmad and his comrades reached Kabul on May 1, 1920, or thereabouts.

Maulavi Abdur Rab and Acharya also were in Kabul at the time. Rafiq Ahmad writes :

“We met Abdur Rab and Acharya of South India in a hall in the Russian Embassy. After having tea and cakes, we started talking. Maulavi Abdur Rab said that they had come from Russia to Kabul three or four months back. The situation in Kabul was that Badshah Amanullah wanted to have peace with the British at any price. Disappointed at this development, he was going back to Russia with his comrades. There were some Indians among these comrades. He said that there had been a revolution in Russia and the Revolutionary Government would give them help and facilities in all their endeavours. Abdur Rab also said that for those who wanted it the Soviet Government would even arrange the journey from Russia to Anatolia. Subsequent events showed that the Soviet Government had extended this facility regularly to the *muhajirs*; but the *muhajirs* had never been given permission to enter Anatolia. Abdur Rab wanted the names of those of us who wanted to go to Russia with him. He told us that he would secure necessary permission from the Badshah whom he was meeting the next day. A number of them, including Rafiq Ahmad, submitted their names to him on the spot. The next day when Muhammad Akbar Khan, Muhammad Akbar Shah, Sultan Muhammad and Gawhar Rahman met Abdur Rab, he informed them that Badshah Amanullah would not permit the *muhajirs* to go to Russia. He had probably met the Badshah meanwhile. Abdur Rab then advised the *muhajirs* to submit a joint petition to the Badshah, praying for permission to go to Russia. The *muhajirs* did accordingly. Abdur Rab said, “Take your own time and come. I shall wait for you in Tashkent.” Abdur Rab left for Tashkent and we went to Jablus Siraj. To some of the *muhajirs* he gave £3 per head so that they could get suits of clothes made for themselves.”

This account shows clearly that Abdur Rab was not at all a staunch Khilafatist. Instead of encouraging the *muhajirs* to go to Anatolia, he encouraged them to go to Russia, the land of revolution. What views did he hold and what course of

politics did he follow? He used to declare himself a Communist; then why did he not join the Communist Party of India? If he thought that the Communist Party of India formed in Tashkent was not worth its name, he could have joined it and built it into a real Communist Party. His following was not small. He had visited Russia long before Roy. He had met Lenin long before Roy came to Russia. What, however, I fail to understand at all is what effect his actions produced on Indian politics.

The data that Dr. Devendra Kaushik collected from old local newspapers during his stay in Uzbekistan contain the information that a small party of Indian revolutionaries from Kabul arrived in Tashkent in March, 1919.\* On the basis of the data collected by him, Dr Kaushik says that Abdur Rab was the leader of this party. But Col. F. M. Bailey, a British Intelligence officer, who was in Tashkent at that time, has written in his book *Mission to Tashkent* that Barkatullah was the leader of the party. Dr. Kaushik has mentioned also this fact in his article. The First Congress of the Communist International was held from March 2 to March, 6, 1919. It is, therefore, evident that Barkatullah, Abdur Rab and others of the party would have then been guests not of the Communist International but of the Soviet Government. Abdur Rab was a very good speaker; besides, he could make speeches in Turkish, which made him quite popular with the residents of Tashkent. It is learnt from Dr Kaushik's article that the old residents of Tashkent still remember Abdur Rab.

Considering the circumstances, we can easily realize that Abdur Rab had love of authority and leadership. He was, therefore, disappointed to see Manabendranath Roy in Tashkent and realized at once that leadership had passed into Roy's hands. The organizational theory that a revolutionary party was greater than one's personal leadership did not appeal to Abdur Rab's mind. He started building his own party with the *muhajirs*. Although he had declared himself a Communist,

\* Link (English weekly, Delhi) January 26, 1966, p. 72.

he had in his pocket another organization named 'Association of the Indian Revolutionaries'. Dr Bhupendranath Datta has quite wrongly referred to this organization as 'The Indian Nationalist Samiti'. Abdur Rab was in Moscow, organizing a separate party of his own with the *muhajirs*. Later some *muhajir* youths returned to Peshawar and made various statements to the police, divulging which of them had belonged to Abdur Rab's party and which of them to Roy's party, i.e. the Communist Party of India. Roy's quarrel with Acharya of South India started during their stay in Tashkent. Roy had proposed that Acharya return to India, stay underground and organize the Communist Party of India. It was not possible for Acharya, who had left India in 1908 and joined the exiles abroad, to return to India and do this work. Acharya felt that Roy was making a proposal of this kind only to discredit him. Acharya made a counter proposal that Roy was not fit to remain in the Communist Party and that his name, therefore, should be struck off the Party rolls. The Communist Party of Turkestan tried to make up this quarrel but having failed, they advised both the parties to go to Moscow for a settlement. Moscow's verdict went against Acharya. Acharya then rejoined Abdur Rab's group. From the documents of the Moscow Conspiracy Case (1922-23), held in Peshawar, it is found that Abdur Rab was in the end working for the American Relief Mission. The Soviet Government and the Communist International did not approve of this action of his. Therefore, Abdur Rab too left the Soviet Union in disgrace and went to Germany. On August 30, 1967, Raja Mahendra Pratap wrote to me that "Maulavi Rab had a Turkish wife and he was, therefore, allowed to visit Stamboul at the request of some Turkish official. He must have died also in Turkey". The Raja has heard only that Maulavi Rab is no longer alive.



## **Mainfesto to the 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921**

**Sent by M. N. Roy from abroad**

Fellow Countrymen,

You have met in a very critical moment of the history of our country to decide various questions affecting gravely the future of the national life and progress. The Indian nation today stands on the eve of a great revolution, not only political but economic and social as well. The vast mass of humanity, which inhabits the great peninsula, has begun to move towards a certain goal; it is awakening after centuries of social stagnation resulting from economic and political oppression. The National Congress has placed itself at the head of this movement. Yours is a very difficult task, and the way before you is beset with obstacles almost insuperable and pitfalls treacherous and troublesome. The mission of leading the people of India onward to the goal of national liberation is great and you have made this great mission your own. The National Congress is no longer a holiday gathering engaged in idle debates and futile resolution making; it has become a political body—the leader of the movement of national liberation.

The newly acquired political importance obliges the Congress to change its philosophical background; it must cease to be a subjective body; its deliberations and decisions should be determined by the objective conditions prevailing and not according to the notions, desires and prejudices of its leaders. It was so when the Congress, national in name only, was the political organ which expressed the opinions and aspiration

of a small group of men who ruled over it. If the old Congress dominated by the Mehta-Gokhale-Bose-Banerji combination is dead and discarded from the field of pragmatic politics, it is because these men wanted to build a nation after their own image; they did not and could not take into consideration the material they had to work with; they failed to feel the pulse of the people; they knew what they thought and wanted, but they did not know, neither did they care to know what the people—the people which constituted that nation which their Congress also pretended to represent—needed for its welfare, for its progress. The old Congress landed in political bankruptcy because it could not make the necessities of the common people its own; it took for granted that its demands for administrative and fiscal reforms reflected the interest of the man in the street; the “grand old men” of the Moderate Party believed that intellect and learning were their inviolable mandates for the leadership of the nation. This lamentable subjectivism, originating from defective or total absence of understanding of the social forces that underlie and give strength to all movements, made the venerable fathers of Indian Nationalism betray their own child; and it led them to their own ruin, disgrace and political death. You, leaders of the new congress, should be careful not to make the same mistake; because the same mistake will lead to the same disaster.

The programme of the Congress under the leadership of the Non-cooperation Party, is to attain Swaraj within the shortest possible time. It has discarded the old impotent tactics of securing petty reforms by means of constitutional agitation. Proudly and determinedly, the Congress has raised the standard with “Swaraj within a Year” written on it. Under this banner, the people of India are invited to unite; holding this banner high you exhort them to march forward till the goal is reached. This is indeed a noble cause. It is but natural that the people of India should fight for the right of ruling itself. But the function of the Congress, as leader of the nation, is not only to point out the goal, but to lead the people

step by step towards that goal. From its activities of the last year, it is apparent that the Congress understands its task and is trying to find the best way of executing it. The people must be infused with enthusiasm to fight for Swaraj; they must be united in this struggle, because without union the goal will not be attained.

Why was the old Congress discredited ? Because it could not make the national question a vital problem for the people. Under the old leaders, the Congress was caught in the cess-pool of political pedantry and petty reformism. Not much greater results can be expected if these are to be replaced by abstract idealism and political confusion. In order to deserve the name and to be able to execute the difficult task set before it, the National Congress must not permit itself to be carried away by the sentiment and idealism of a handful of individuals however great and patriotic they may be; it must take into consideration the cold material facts; it must survey with keenness the everyday life of the people—their wants and sufferings. Ours is not a mere political game; it is a great social struggle.

The greatest problem before the 36th Congress is how to enlist the full-hearted support of the people in the national cause, how to make the ignorant masses follow the banner of Swaraj. In order to solve this problem, the first thing necessary is to know what is that ails the masses? What do they want? What is needed for improving the immediate environment of their material existence? Because only by including the redress of their immediate grievances in its programme will the Congress be able to assume the practical leadership of the masses of the people?

Several thousand noisy, irresponsible students and a number of middle-class intellectuals followed by an ignorant mob momentarily incited by fanaticism, cannot be the social basis of the political organ of a nation. The toiling masses in the cities, the dumb millions in the villages must be brought into the ranks of the movement if it is to be potential. How to realize this mass organization is the vital problem before the

Congress. How can the man working in the factories or labouring of the fields be convinced that national independence will put an end to his sufferings? It is not a fact that hundreds of thousands of workers employed in the mills and factories owned by rich Indians, not a few of whom are leaders of the national movement, live in a condition unbearable and are treated in a manner revolting? Of course by prudent people such discomfiting questions would be hushed in the name of the national cause. The argument of these politicians is "let us get rid of the foreign domination first." Such cautious political acumen may be flattering to the upper classes; but the poor workers and peasants are hungry. If they are to be led on to fight, it must be for the betterment of their material condition. The slogan which will correspond to the interest of the majority of the population and consequently will electrify them with enthusiasm to fight consciously, is "*Land to the peasant and bread to the worker*". The abstract doctrine of national self-determination leaves them passive; personal charms create enthusiasm loose and passing.

How can the Congress expect to arouse lasting popular enthusiasm in the name of the Khilafat and by demanding the revision of the treaty of Sevres? The high politics behind such slogans may be easy for the learned intellectuals to understand; but it is beyond the comprehension of the masses of Indian people who have been steeped in ignorance not only by the foreign ruler, but by our own religious and social institutions. Such propaganda based on the questionable doctrine of utilizing the ignorance of the masses in order to make them do the bidding of the Congress, cannot be expected to produce the desired result. If the masses of the Indian people are to be drawn into the struggle for national freedom, it will not be done by exploiting their ignorance. Their consciousness must be aroused first of all. They must know what they are fighting for. And the cause for which they fight must include their immediate needs. What does the man in the street need? The only aspiration

of his life is to get two meals a day, which he hardly achieves. And such are the people who constitute 90% of the nation. Therefore, it is evident that any movement not based on the interests of these masses cannot be of any lasting importance or of formidable power.

The programme of the Congress has to be denuded of all sentimental trimmings; it should be dragged down from the height of abstract idealism; it must talk of the things indispensable for mortal life of the common human being; it must echo the modest aspirations of the toiling masses; the object for which the Indian people will fight should not be looked for somewhere in the unknown regions of Mesopotamia or Arabia or Constantinople; it should be found in their immediate surroundings, in their huts, on the land, in the factory. Hungry mortals cannot be expected to fight for an abstract ideal. The Congress must not always urge the people, which can be called the classical example of suffering and sacrifice personified, to suffer and sacrifice only. The first signs of the end of their age-long suffering should be brought within their vision. They should be helped in their economic fights. The Congress can no longer defer the formulation of a definite programme of economic and social reconstruction. The formulation of such constructive programme advocating the redress of the immediate grievances of the suffering masses, demanding the improvement of their present miserable condition, is the principal task of the 36th Congress.

Mr. Gandhi was right in declaring that "the Congress must cease to be a debating society of talented lawyers", but if it is to be, as he prescribes in the same breath, an organ of the "merchants and manufacturers", no change will have been made in its character, in so far as the interest of the majority of the people are concerned. It will not be any more national than its predecessor. It will not meet any more dignified end. If it is to represent and defend the interest of one class *viz.* the merchants and manufacturers, it cannot but fail to take care of the common people. The inevitable

consequence of this failure will be the divorce of the Congress from the majority of the nation. The merchants and manufacturers alone cannot lead the national struggle to a successful end; neither will the intellectuals and petty shopkeepers add any appreciable strength to the movement. What is indispensable is the mass energy: the country can be free, Swaraj can be realized, only with the conscious action of the masses of the people. In order to be able to execute its task, the Congress must know how to awaken the mass energy, how to lead the masses to the field of resolute action. But the tactics of the Congress betray its lamentable indifference to and lack of understanding of the popular interest. The Congress proposes to exploit the ignorance of the people and expects them to follow its lead blindly. This cannot happen. If the leader remains indifferent to the interest of the follower, the two will soon fall asunder. The masses are awakening; they are showing signs of vigour; they are signifying their readiness to fight for their own interest; the programme of using them as mere instrument, which are to be kept in their proper place, will soon prove ineffective. If the Congress makes the mistake of becoming the political apparatus of the propertied class, it must forfeit the title to the leadership of the nation. Unfailing social forces are constantly at work; they will make the workers and peasants conscious of their economic and social interests. and ere long the latter will develop their won political party which will refuse to be led astray by the upper class politicians.

Non-cooperation cannot unify the nation. If we dare to look the facts in the face, it has failed. It is bound to fail because it does not take the economic laws into consideration. The only social class in whose hand non-cooperation can prove to be a powerful weapon, that is the working class, has not only been left out of the programme, but the prophet of non-cooperation himself declared "it is dangerous to make political use of the factory workers". So the only element, which on account of its social-economic position, could make non-cooperation a success is left out.

The reason is not hard to find; the defenders of the interests of the merchants and manufacturers betray unconsciously their apprehension lest wage-earners should be encouraged to question the right of exploitation conceded to the propertied class by all respectable society. The other classes which are called upon to non-cooperate, being dependent economically on the present system, cannot separate themselves from it, even if it is damned as "satanic" by the highest authorities.

Non-cooperation may prove to be a suitable weapon to fight, or better said, to embarrass the foreign bureaucracy, but at best, it is merely destructive. The possible end of foreign domination, in itself, is not sufficient inducement for the people at large. They should be told in clear terms what benefit would accrue to them from the establishment of Swaraj. They should be convinced that national autonomy will help them solve the problem of physical existence. Neither will empty phrases and vague promises serve the purpose; it has to be demonstrated by the acts of the Congress that proposes to achieve the amelioration of the people's suffering, and that it will not neglect the immediate needs of the poor in quest of abstract freedom to be realized at some future date.

For the defence and furtherance of the interests of the native manufacturers, the programme of Swadeshi and boycott is plausible. It may succeed in harming the British capitalist class and thus bring an indirect pressure on the British Government, though being based on wrong economics, the chances of its ultimate success are very problematical. But as a slogan for uniting the people under the banner of the Congress, the boycott is doomed to failure; because it does not correspond, nay it is positively contrary, to the economic condition of the vast majority of the population. If the Congress chooses to base itself on the frantic enthusiasm for burning foreign cloth, it will be building castles on a bed of quick sand. Such enthusiasm cannot last; the time will soon come when people will feel the scarcity of cloth and

as long as there will be cheap foreign cloth in the market there can be no possibility of inducing the poor to go naked rather than to buy it. The *Charka* has been relegated to its well-deserved place in the museum; to expect that in those days of machinery it can be revived and made to supply the need of 320 millions of human beings, is purely visionary. The boycott will enlist the support of the manufacturers, but it will never receive a dependable response from the consumers. Then, all the doctrines of purifying the soul may be good for the opulent intellectuals, but their charm for the starving millions cannot be permanent. Physical needs know no bounds, and a political movement cannot be sublimated beyond material reasons and necessities. They are mistaken who say that Indian civilization is purely spiritual, and that the Indian people are not subject to the same material laws that determine the destinies of the rest of humanity.

While for any serious or lasting purposes, the Non-cooperation programme cannot be said to have achieved a small part of what was expected, the 36th Congress intends to go a step further on the road of Non-cooperation. To their great discomfiture the leaders of the Congress observe the popular enthusiasm evoked by Khilafat agitation, and Non-cooperation subsiding day by day. The enlisting of several lakhs of members and the raising of the Tilak-Swaraj Fund cannot be accepted as a clear reflection of the popular support behind the Congress. Pessimism about the solidity of ranks and tenacity of purpose of the Non-cooperation demonstration has of late been repeatedly expressed by responsible Congress leaders both from the press and platform. To enlist his name in the Congress register and to contribute a rupee to the Swaraj Fund does not necessarily imply that a member will be ready to take active part in the struggle. In order to keep the artificially fomented popular enthusiasm alive, the leaders of the Congress have been looking for new diversions of an exciting character. But either consciously or unconsciously, they would not lay their hand on the real cause of popular discontent and develop their discontent by helping



the masses acquire consciousness. Instead, another irresponsible step has been taken. Without waiting for the annual Congress, the All-India Committee has sanctioned Civil Disobedience. But the very language of the resolution shows that its authors themselves are in doubt as to whether it can be carried into practice any better than the other aspects of Non-cooperation. The resolution asks "those who could support themselves to leave the government services". Considering the fact that the proportion of the government employees unable to make both ends meet one day without their miserable salary, is almost 90%, it cannot be expected that the response to this ukase will be very imposing.

Civil Disobedience when carried into practice, will be some sort of a national strike. If everybody stops working, the government will be paralysed. But is the Congress certain that everybody will readily respond to its call? If it is, then it betrays lamentable ignorance of the material condition of the people, as well as of the economic laws that determine all social forces and political actions. On leaving their civil and military occupations, thousands and thousands of people will be without any means of livelihood; is the Congress in a position to find work for them? And it should not be forgotten that the lower middle-class element employed in the government departments, will never stoop to manual work. The Congress leaders seem to appreciate the complexity of the situation; because, in the words of Mr. Gandhi, "they are not prepared to provide employment for those soldiers who would leave the army". With the disastrous effects of the exodus of the Assam plantation workers still fresh in memory, how can it be expected that the same tactics would not be followed by the same result in the future? The political organ of a nation cannot execute its task only with popular demonstrations. Our object is not confined to bothering the government; we are struggling for freedom. It cannot be realized unless the activities of the Congress are determined by a constructive programme; unless the leadership of the Congress becomes more responsible and less demagogic.

Taken light-heartedly, the resolution of Civil Disobedience will end in making the Congress ridiculous. Because, in spite of all optimism, all enthusiasm, the Congress does not represent the interests of all the sections and classes of which the nation is composed. Much less does it advocate the material welfare of the workers and peasants who form the overwhelming majority of the nation. What is the use of speaking in high-sounding language when the speeches are not backed up by action, determined and permanent? The spirit of the people cannot be raised by such impotent tactics; nor is the government terrorised. They only discredit the speaker, sooner or later. The threat of declaring *Jehad* unless the Khilaphat is redeemed has become too hackneyed; the deferring of the establishment of Swaraj month by month fails to inspire confidence in thinking people. Why do these bombastic resolutions of the Congress never come out of the airy realm of words? Because the Congress does not determine its tactics in accordance with the play of social forces.

It is simply deluding oneself to think that the great ferment of popular energy expressed by the strikes in the cities and agrarian riots in the country, is the result of the Congress or, better said, of the Non-cooperation agitation. No, it is neither the philippics against the "satanic western civilization", nor the constant reiteration of the Punjab wrongs, nor the abstract formula of Khilafat that have awakened the discontent of the wretched masses, who appear to have once and for all shaken off the spirit of passive resignation. The cause of this awakening, which is the only factor that has added real vigour and a show of majesty to the national struggle, is to be looked for in their age-long economic exploitation and social slavery. The mass revolt is directed against the propertied class, irrespective of nationality. This exploitation had become intense long since, but the economic crisis during the war-period accentuated it. The seething discontent among the masses, which broke out in open revolt after the war, was not, as the Congress would have it, because the Government betrayed all its promises, but because the

abnormal trade boom in the aftermath of the war intensified the economic exploitation to such an extent that people were desperate, and all bonds of patience were broken.

Newly developed industries brought hundreds and thousands of workers to the crowded cities where they were thrown into a condition altogether revolting. Sudden prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers brought in its train increased poverty and suffering for the workers. City life opened new visions to the workers hitherto resigned to their miserable lot as ordained by Providence. The inequality of wealth and comfort became too glaring, the worker got over the lethargic resignation typical of the Indian peasantry, and rebelled. His revolt, under such circumstances could not have been against this or that government; it was against the brutal system that wanted to crush him to the dust. Mass revolt is alarmingly contagious. The spirit was soon carried to the villages by various channels, and resulted in agrarian riots, which today are spreading like wild-fire all over the country. These are the development of the social forces generated by objective conditions. The political movement must give up the pretention of having created these forces, but must bend its head before their majestic strides and adapt itself to their action and reaction. It is these social forces which lend potentiality and real strength to the political movement. In fact every political movement is the outcome of the development of certain social forces.

What has the Congress done to lead the workers and peasants in their economic struggle? It has tried so far only to exploit the mass movement for its political ends. In every strike or peasant revolt the non-cooperators have sacrificed the economic interest of the strikers for a political demonstration. The Congress from its intellectual, ideological and material aloofness, demands Swaraj and expects the masses of population to follow it through thick and thin. It does not hesitate to call upon the poverty-stricken workers and peasants to make all kinds of sacrifices, sacrifices which are to be made in the name of national welfare, but which contribute

more to the benefit of the native wealthy than to harm the foreign ruler. The Congress claims the political leadership of the nation, but every act betrays its ignorance of or indifference to the material interest of the majority of the people. So long the Congress does not show its capability and desire to make the everyday struggle of the masses its own, it will not be able to secure their steady and conscious support. Of course, it should not be forgotten that with or without the leadership of the Congress, the workers and peasants will continue their own economic and social struggle and eventually conquer what they need. They don't need so much the leadership of the Congress but the latter's political success depends entirely on the conscious support of the masses. Let not the Congress believe that it has won the unconditional leadership of the masses without having done anything to defend their material interests.

His personal character may lead the masses to worship the Mahatmaji; strikers engaged in a struggle for securing a few pice increase of wages may shout "Mahatmaji-ki-jai"; the first fury of rebellion may lead them to do many things without any conceivable connection with what they are really fighting for; their newly aroused enthusiasm; choked for ages by starvation, may make them burn their last pieces of loin-cloth; but in their sober moment what do they ask for? It is not political autonomy, nor is it the redemption of the Khilafat. It is the petty, but imperative necessities of every day life that egg them on to the fight. The workers in the cities demand higher wages, shorter hours, better living conditions; and the poor peasantry fight for the possession of land, freedom from excessive rents and taxes, redress from the exorbitant exploitation by the landlord. They rebel against exploitation, social and economic; it does not make any difference to them to which nationality the exploiter belongs. Such are the nature of the forces that are really and objectively revolutionary; and any change in the political administration of the country will be effected by these forces. The sooner the Congress understands this, the better.

If the Congress aspires to assume the leadership of the masses without founding itself upon the awakening mass energy, it will soon be relegated to the dead past in order to share the ignominy of its predecessor. To enlist the conscious support of the masses, it should approach them not with high politics and towering idealism, but with the readiness to help them secure their immediate wants, then gradually to lead them further ahead. It is neither the Khilafat cry, nor the Boycott resolution, nor the absurd doctrine of "back to the Vedas with Charka in hand", nor the scheme of making the middle-class intellectuals and petty shop-keepers declare a national strike that will unite the majority of the nation behind the Congress. Words cannot make people fight; they have to be impelled by irresistible objective forces. The oppressed, pauperized, miserable workers and peasants are bound to fight, because there is no hope left for them. The Congress must have the workers and peasants behind it; and it can win their lasting confidence only when it ceases to sacrifice them ostensibly for a higher cause, namely the so-called national interest, but really for the material prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers. If the Congress would lead the revolution which is shaking India to the very foundation, let it not put its faith in mere demonstrations and temporary wild enthusiasm. Let it make the immediate demands of the Trade Unions, as summarized by the Cawnpur workers, its own demands; let it make the programme of the Kisan Sabhas its own programme, and the time will soon come when the Congress will not stop before any obstacle; it will not have to lament that Swaraj cannot be declared on a fixed date because the people have not made enough sacrifice. It will be backed by the irresistible strength of the entire people consciously fighting for the material interest. Failing to do so, with all its zeal for Non-cooperation, for all its determination to have the Sevres treaty revised, despite its doctrine of Soul-Force, the Congress will have to give in to another organization which will grow out of ranks of the common people with the object of fighting for their interests. If the

Congress wants to have the nation behind it, let it not be blinded by the interest of a small class; let it not be guided by the unseen hand of the "merchants and manufacturers" who have replaced the "talented lawyers" in the Congress, and when the present tactics seek to install in the place of Satanic British.

While the Congress under the banner of Non-cooperation, has been dissipating the revolutionary forces, a counter-revolutionary element has appeared in the field to mislead the latter. Look out, the revolutionary zeal of the workers is subsiding, as shown by the slackening of the strike movement; the Trade Unions are falling in the hands of reformists, adventurers and government agents; the Aman Sabhas are captivating the attention of the poor peasants by administering to their immediate grievances. The government knows where lies the strength of the movement; it is trying to divorce the masses from the Congress. This clever policy directed by master hands, cannot be counteracted by windy phrases and sentimental appeals. Equally clever steps should be taken. The consciousness of the masses must be awakened; that is the only way of keeping them steady in the fight.

Fellow Countrymen, a few words about Hindu-Moslem unity, which has been given such a prominent place in the Congress programme. The people of India are divided by vertical lines, into innumerable sects, religions, creeds and castes. To seek to cement these cleavages by artificial and sentimental propaganda is a hopeless task. But fortunately, and perhaps to the great discomfiture of some orthodox patriots, who believe that India is a special creation of Providence, there is one mighty force that spontaneously divides all these innumerable sections horizontally into two homogeneous parts. This is the economic force: the exploitation of the disinherited by the propertied class. This force is in operation in India, and is effecting the innumerable vertical lines of social cleavage, while divorcing the two great classes further apart. The inexorable working of this force is drawing the Hindu workers and peasants closer and

closer to their Moslem comrades. This is the only agency of Hindu-Moslem unity. Whoever will be bold enough to depend on the ruthless march of this force of social-economics, will not have to search frantically for pleas by which the Musulman can be induced to respect the cow, nor to make the ignorant Hindu peasants believe that the salvation of his soul and the end of his earthly misery lies in the redemption of the Khilafat or the subjugation of the Armenians by the Turks. Hindu-Moslem unity is not to be cemented by sentimentality; it is being realised practically by the development of economic forces. Let us concentrate and depend on the objective.

Fellow Countrymen, let the Congress reflect the needs of the nation and not the ambition of a small class. Let the Congress cease to engage in political gambling and vibrate in response to the social forces developing in the country. Let it prove by deeds that it wants to end foreign exploitation not to secure the monopoly to the native propertied class, but to liberate the Indian people from all exploitation, political, economic and social. Let it show that it really represents the people and can lead them in their struggle in every stage of it. Then the Congress will secure the leadership of the nation, and Swaraj will be won not on a particular day :elected according to the caprice of some individuals, but by the conscious and concerted action of the masses.

Manabendra Nath Roy  
Aboni Mukherji

## **Moulana Hasrat Mohani's Resolution for Complete Independence of India**

**In Ahmedabad Congress, 1921**

It is on record that Moulana Hasrat Mohani placed a resolution in Ahmedabad Congress in 1921 for complete independence of India.

It is already stated in this volume (Page 123) that M. N. Roy had sent a detailed appeal in the form of a memorandum to Ahmedabad Congress in 1921 which was to be presided over by Desh Bandhu Chittaranjan Das. M. N. Roy had also sent this memorandum to several individuals in India by post. M. N. Roy had said in his memoir (Page 547, 1964 Edition) "But ultimately it did come before the Congress legally. Two delegates from Ajmer reprinted the document on their signatures and submitted a resolution that the Congress should discuss it. It was further said that the appeal gave Maulana Hazrat\* Mohani the idea to move for the first time in a Congress Session the resolution that complete independence was the goal of the Indian National Congress." M. N. Roy further stated in his memoirs: "That was the first item in the programme of national revolution outlined in the appeal. The Congress Session rejected Hazrat Mohani's resolution and the mover was arrested soon afterwards. But the ideal of complete independence gained ground in the ranks of the Congress, although still for some time the latter officially waged war against the "bureaucracy".

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\* In Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's "The History of the Indian National Congress", the name appears as Maulana Hasrat Mohani (vide page 228, vol. I, 1946 Edition).



That Maulana Hasrat Mohani's resolution placed in Ahmedabad Congress in 1921 for complete independence of India was a very significant event before the whole Ahmedabad Congress is borne out by what Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya had said in his "The History of the Indian National Congress", Volume I, page 228, quoted below :

"We must now refer to a debate initiated by Maulana Hasrat Mohani, who proposed to define 'Swaraj' in the creed as "Complete Independence, free from all foreign control." At this distance of time, one is apt to look upon it as the most natural-sequence of all that had happened, and may even wonder why it should have been resisted at all by the Congress or by Gandhi. But, at the time, Gandhi was obliged to speak out frankly :

"The levity with which the proposition has been taken by some of you has grieved me. It has grieved me because it shows lack of responsibility. As responsible men and women, we should go back to the days of Nagpur and Calcutta."

## Lenin's Colonial Theses\*

### For The Second Congress of The Communist International

In submitting for discussion by the Second Congress of the Communist International the following draft theses on the national and the colonial questions I would request all comrades, especially those who possess concrete information on any of these very complex problems, to let me have their opinions, amendments, addenda and concrete remarks *in the most concise form (no more than two or three pages)*, particularly on the following points:

- Austrian experience;
- Polish-Jewish and Ukrainian experience;
- Alsace-Lorraine and Belgium ;
- Ireland;
- Danish-German, Italo-French and Italo-Slav relations;
- Balkan experience;
- Eastern peoples;
- The struggle against Pan-Islamism;
- Relations in the Caucasus;
- The Bashkir and Tatar Republics;
- Kirghizia;
- Turkestan, its experience;
- Negroes in America;
- Colonies;
- China-Korea-Japan.

June 5, 1920

*N. Lenin*

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\* "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" were received by Lenin from G.V. Chicherin, N. N. Krestinsky,

1) An abstract or formal posing of the problem of equality in general and national equality in particular is in the very nature of bourgeois democracy. Under the guise of the equality of the individual in general, bourgeois democracy proclaims the formal or legal equality of the property-owner and the proletarian, the exploiter and the exploited, thereby grossly deceiving the oppressed classes. On the plea that all men are absolutely equal, the bourgeoisie is transforming the idea of equality, which is itself a reflection of relations in commodity production, into a weapon in its struggle against the abolition of classes. The real meaning of the demand for equality consists in its being a demand for the abolition of classes.

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J. V. Stalin, M. G. Rafes, Y. A. Preobrazhensky, N. D. Lapinsky, and I. Nedelkov (N. Shablin), representative of the Bulgarian Communists, as well as from a number of leaders in Bashkiria, Kirghizia, and Turkestan. Along with correct ideas, the notes contained certain grave errors. Thus, Chicherin gave a wrong interpretation to Lenin's theses on the necessity of support for national liberation movements and on agreements with the national bourgeoisie, without due regard for Lenin's distinction between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. With regard to this Lenin wrote : "I lay *greater* stress on the alliance with the *peasantry* (which does not *quite* mean the bourgeoisie)" (Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the C. C. C. P. S. U.). Referring to the relations between the future socialist Europe and the economically underdeveloped and dependent countries, Preobrazhensky wrote : "...if it proves impossible to reach economic agreement with the leading national groups, the latter will inevitably be suppressed by force and economically important regions will be compelled to join a union of European Republics." Lenin decisively objected to this remark : "...it goes too far. It cannot be proved, and it is wrong to say that *suppression* by force is 'inevitable'. That is radically wrong" (see *Voprosy Istorii KPSS [Problems of the C.P.S.U History]* 1958, No. 2, p. 16).

A grave error was made by Stalin, who did not agree with Lenin's proposition on the difference between federal relations among the Soviet republics based on autonomy, and federal relations among independent republics. In a letter to Lenin, dated June 12, 1920, he declared that in reality "there is no difference between these two types of federal relations, or else it is so small as to be negligible": Stalin continued to advocate this later, when, in 1922, he proposed the "autonomisation" of the independent Soviet republics. These ideas were criticised in detail by Lenin in his article "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'", and in his letter to members of the Political Bureau "On the Formation of the U.S.S.R." (see present edition, Vol. 36, and *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, pp. 496-98).

2) In conformity with its fundamental task of combating bourgeois democracy and exposing its falseness and hypocrisy, the Communist Party, as the avowed champion of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the bourgeois yoke, must base its policy, in the national question too, not on abstract and formal principles but, first, on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; second, on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; third, on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations, in order to counter the bourgeois-democratic lies that play down this colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by an insignificant minority of the richest and advanced capitalist countries, a feature characteristic of the era of finance capital and imperialism.

3) The imperialist war of 1914-18 has very clearly revealed to all nations and to the oppressed classes of the whole world the falseness of bourgeois-democratic phrases, by practically demonstrating that the Treaty of Versailles of the celebrated "Western democracies" is an even more brutal and foul act of violence against weak nations than was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of the German Junkers and the Kaiser. The League of Nations and the entire post-war policy of the Entente reveal this truth with even greater clarity and distinctness. They are everywhere intensifying the revolutionary struggle both of the proletariat in the advanced countries and of the toiling masses in the colonial and dependent countries. They are hastening the collapse of the petty-bourgeois nationalist illusions that nations can live together in peace and equality under capitalism.

4) From these fundamental premises it follows that the Communist International's entire policy on the national and the colonial questions should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and

countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie. This union alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible.

5) The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities, who are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the Soviet system's victory over world imperialism.

6) Consequently, one cannot at present confine oneself to a bare recognition or proclamation of the need for closer union between the working people of the various nations; a policy must be pursued that will achieve the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movements. The form of this alliance should be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement in the proletariat of each country, or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities.

7) Federation is a transitional form to the complete unity of the working people of different nations. The feasibility of federation has already been demonstrated in practice both by the relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and other Soviet Republics (the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian in the past, and the Azerbaijan and Ukrainian at present), and by the relations within the R.S.F.S.R. in respect of nationalities which formerly enjoyed neither statehood nor autonomy (e.g., the Bashkir and Tatar autonomous republics in the R.S.F.S.R., founded in 1919 and 1920 respectively).

8) In this respect, it is the task of the Communist International to further develop and also to study and test by

experience these new federations, which are arising on the basis of the Soviet system and the Soviet movement. In recognising that federation is a transitional form to complete unity, it is necessary to strive for ever closer federal unity, bearing in mind, first, that the Soviet republics, surrounded as they are by the imperialist powers of the whole world—which from the military standpoint are immeasurably stronger—cannot possibly continue to exist without the closest alliance; second, that a close economic alliance between the Soviet republics is necessary, otherwise the productive forces which have been ruined by imperialism cannot be restored and the well-being of the working people cannot be ensured; third, that there is a tendency towards the creation of a single world economy, regulated by the proletariat of all nations as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency has already revealed itself quite clearly under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and consummated under socialism.

9) The Communist International's national policy in the sphere of relations within the state cannot be restricted to the bare, formal, purely declaratory and actually non-committal recognition of the equality of nations to which the bourgeois democrats confine themselves—both those who frankly admit being such, and those who assume the name of socialists (such as the socialists of the Second International).

In all their propaganda and agitation—both within parliament and outside it—the Communist parties must consistently expose that constant violation of the equality of nations and of the guaranteed rights of national minorities which is to be seen in all capitalist countries, despite their “democratic” constitutions. It is also necessary, first, constantly to explain that only the Soviet system is capable of ensuring genuine equality of nations, by uniting first the proletarians and then the whole mass of the working population in the struggle against the bourgeoisie; and, second, that all Communist parties should render direct aid to the revolutionary movements

among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the American Negroes, etc.) and in the colonies.

Without the latter condition, which is particularly important, the struggle against the oppression of dependent nations and colonies, as well as recognition of their right to secede, are but a false signboard, as is evidenced by the parties of the Second International.

10) Recognition of internationalism in word, and its replacement in deed by petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism, in all propaganda, agitation and practical work, is very common, not only among the parties of the Second International, but also among those which have withdrawn from it, and often even among parties which now call themselves communist. The urgency of the struggle against this evil, against the most deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices, looms ever larger with the mounting exigency of the task of converting the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national dictatorship (i.e. existing in a single country and incapable of determining world politics) into an international one (i.e. a dictatorship of the proletariat involving at least several advanced countries, and capable of exercising a decisive influence upon world politics as a whole). Petty-bourgeois nationalism proclaims as internationalism the mere recognition of the equality of nations, and nothing more. Quite apart from the fact that this recognition is purely verbal, petty-bourgeois nationalism preserves national self-interest intact, whereas proletarian internationalism demands, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and, second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital.

Thus, in countries that are already fully capitalist and have workers' parties that really act as the vanguard of the proletariat, the struggle against opportunist and petty-bourgeois

pacifist distortions of the concept and policy of internationalism is a primary and cardinal task.

11) With regard to the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate, it is particularly important to bear in mind :

first, that all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily with the workers of the country the backward nation is colonially or financially dependent on;

second, the need for a struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements in backward countries;

third, the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mullahs, etc.;\*

fourth, the need, in backward countries, to give special support to the peasant movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and to strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the West-European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies, and in the backward countries generally. It is particularly necessary to exert every effort to apply the basic principles of the Soviet system in countries where pre-capitalist relations predominate—by setting up “working people’s Soviets”, etc.;

fifth, the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois–democratic liberation trends in the backward countries; the Communist International should support bourgeois–democratic national

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\* In the proofs Lenin inserted a brace opposite points 2 and 3 and wrote “2 and 3 to be united”.—*Ed.*



movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form:

sixth, the need constantly to explain and expose among the broadest working masses of all countries, and particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by the imperialist powers, which, under the guise of politically independent states, set up states that are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily. Under present-day international conditions there is no salvation for dependent and weak nations except in a union of Soviet republics.

12) The age-old oppression of colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers has not only filled the working masses of the oppressed countries with animosity towards the oppressor nations, but has also aroused distrust in these nations in general, even in their proletariat. The despicable betrayal of socialism by the majority of the official leaders of this proletariat in 1914-19, when "defence of country" was used as a social-chauvinist cloak to conceal the defence of the "right" of their "own" bourgeoisie to oppress colonies and fleece financially dependent countries, was certain to enhance this perfectly legitimate distrust. On the other hand, the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small-scale agricultural production, patriarchalism and isolation, which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petty-bourgeois prejudices, i.e., to national egoism

and national narrow-mindedness. These prejudices are bound to die out very slowly, for they can disappear only after imperialism and capitalism have disappeared in the advanced countries, and after the entire foundation of the backward countries' economic life has radically changed. It is therefore the duty of the class-conscious communist proletariat of all countries to regard with particular caution and attention the survivals of national sentiments in the countries and among nationalities which have been oppressed the longest; it is equally necessary to make certain concessions with a view to more rapidly overcoming this distrust and these prejudices. Complete victory over capitalism cannot be won unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of working people in all countries and nations throughout the world voluntarily strive for alliance and unity.

Published in June 1920, in Lenin's Collected Works, Volume No. 31 according to the text of the proof-sheet, as amended by V.I. Lenin

### **3. Report of the Commission on the National and The Colonial Questions, July 26\***

Comrades, I shall confine myself to a brief introduction, after which Comrade Maring, who has been secretary to our commission, will give you a detailed account of the changes we have made in the theses. He will be followed by Comrade Roy, who has formulated the supplementary theses. Our commission have unanimously adopted both the preliminary theses, as amended, and the supplementary theses. We have thus reached complete unanimity on all major issues. I shall now make a few brief remarks.

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\*. The commission on the national and the colonial questions, formed by the Second Congress of the Communist International, included representatives of the Communist parties of Russia, Bulgaria, France, Holland, Germany, Hungary, the U.S.A., India, Persia, China, Korea and Britain. The work of the commission was guided by Lenin, whose theses on the national and the colonial questions were discussed at the fourth and fifth sessions of the Congress, and were adopted on July 28.

First, what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.

The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces. The vast majority of the world's population, over a thousand million, perhaps even 1,250 million people, if we take the total population of the world as 1,750 million, in other words, about 70 per cent of the world's population, belong to the oppressed nations, which are either in a state of direct colonial dependence or are semi-colonies, as, for example, Persia, Turkey and China, or else, conquered by some big imperialist power, have become greatly dependent on that power by virtue of peace treaties. This idea of distinction, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses, not only the first theses published earlier over my signature, but also those submitted by Comrade Roy. The latter were framed chiefly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain. Herein lies their great importance to us.

The second basic idea in our theses is that, in the present world situation following the imperialist war, reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. The Communist parties, in

civilised and backward countries alike, can pose and solve political problems correctly only if they make this postulate their starting-point.

Third, I should like especially to emphasise the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. This is a question that has given rise to certain differences. We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the "bourgeois-democratic" movement. It is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships. It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they can emerge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support. However, the objections have been raised that, if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movements. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries, since the imperialist bourgeoisie is doing everything in its power to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations too. There has been a certain *rapprochement* between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—the bourgeoisie, of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movement, and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably proved in the commission, and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into

account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term "national-revolutionary" for the term "bourgeois-democratic". The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie, to whom the heroes of the Second International also belong. Reformist parties already exist in the colonial countries, and in some cases their spokesmen call themselves Social-Democrats and socialists. The distinction I have referred to has been made in all the theses with the result, I think, that our view is now formulated much more precisely.

Next, I would like to make a remark on the subject of peasants' Soviets. The Russian Communists' practical activities in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., have confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions. The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there. Experience has shown us that tremendous difficulties have to be surmounted in these countries. However, the practical results of our work have also shown that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent. This work has been more difficult for us than it will be for comrades in the West-European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is engrossed in the work of state administration. It will readily be understood that peasants' living in conditions of semi-feudal dependence can easily assimilate

and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited, not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalism, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organisation in their condition too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable, not only to proletarian, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. Our experience in this respect is not as yet very considerable. However, the debate in the commission, in which several representatives from colonial countries participated, demonstrated convincingly that the Communist International's theses should point out that peasant's Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon which can be employed, not only in capitalist countries but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations, and that it is the absolute duty of Communist parties and of elements prepared to form Communist parties, everywhere to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets or of working people's Soviets, this to include backward and colonial countries. Wherever conditions permit, they should at once make attempts to set up Soviets of the working people.

This opens up a very interesting and very important field for our practical work. So far our joint experience in this respect has not been extensive, but more and more data will gradually accumulate. It is unquestionable that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should give help to the working masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of developments when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support.

There was quite a lively debate on this question in the commission, not only in connection with the theses I signed, but still more in connection with Comrade Roy's theses, which he will defend here, and certain amendments to which were unanimously adopted.

The question was posed as follows : are we to consider

as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisation in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviet and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience. It has, however, been definitely established that the idea of the Soviets is understood by the mass of the working people in even the most remote nations, that the Soviets should be adapted to the conditions of a pre-capitalist social system, and that the Communist parties should immediately begin work in this direction in all parts of the world.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist parties, not only in their own, but also in the colonial countries, and particularly among the troops employed by the exploiting nations to keep the colonial peoples in subjection.

Comrade Quelch of the British Socialist Party spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treasonable to help the enslaved nations in their uprising against British rule. True, the jingoist

and chauvinist-minded labour aristocrats of Britain and America present a very great danger to socialism, and are a bulwark of the Second International. Here we are confronted with the greatest treachery on the part of leaders and workers belonging to this bourgeois International. The colonial question has been discussed in the Second International as well. The Basle Manifesto is quite clear on this point, too. The parties of the Second International have pledged themselves to revolutionary action, but they have given no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolt against the oppressor nations. This, I think, applies also to most of the parties that have withdrawn from the Second International and wish to join the Third International. We must proclaim this publicly for all to hear, and it is irrefutable. We shall see if any attempt is made to deny it.

All these considerations have formed the basis of our resolutions, which undoubtedly are too lengthy but will nevertheless, I am sure, prove of use and will promote the development and organisation of genuine revolutionary work in connection with the national and the colonial questions. And that is our principal task.

(From V.I. Lenin's Collected Works, Volume No. 31)



## **Draft Theses on The Oriental Question\***

**M. N. Roy**

### **I**

1. The fact that in spite of its general bankruptcy, European capitalism is still holding its own against the increasingly powerful attack of the proletariat in the Western countries, proves that capitalism, as a world-domineering factor, has not yet reached such a state of decay that its immediate downfall is inevitable. Since the time that capitalism entered into its last and most highly developed phase,—Imperialism, its stronghold was no longer kept confined only in the industrially advanced countries of western Europe. The innate contradictions of the capitalist system inevitably led to over-production and its consequence, the recurring commercial and financial crisis : in Imperialism was found a way out of this entanglement. Of course, it was a temporary solution bound to prove ineffective for saving the capitalist mode of production from the collapse under its own contradictions. But the fact is that till today imperial expansion and exploitation do render strength to capitalism to maintain its position in Europe.

The great Imperialist war shook the very foundation of the capitalist order in European countries and had not these states had other sources to draw strength from, they would not be able to continue defending the right of capital till today as they are actually doing. These sources of strength lie in the imperialist character of the present day capitalism which holds in its hands the entire economic, political and military

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\* Presented to the Third Congress of the Communist International

control of the whole world, and thus finds itself in a position to put up a stiff and continued resistance against the proletariat in the home countries. The existence and power of the European bourgeoisie do not depend wholly and exclusively on its ability to bring the greatest amount of surplus-value out of the labour power of the workers in home countries. The imperial right of exploiting the vast non-European markets and peoples has supplied and still supplies it with additional *modus vivendi* and a weapon to defend its position at home in spite of the apparent precariousness and impossibility of maintaining its power there for any length of time.

2. As result of the war, the world finds itself divided today into two great colonial empires, belonging to two powerful capitalist states. The United States of America endeavours to assume supreme and exclusive right of exploiting and ruling the entire New World : while Great Britain has annexed to its empire practically the entire continents of Asia and Africa. Then continental Europe, owing to its utter economic bankruptcy and industrial dislocation, is bound to be an economic dependency of either of these two great imperialist states which are preparing for another giant struggle for world domination. As far as the power of the American bourgeoisie is concerned, the European war has not affected it very much; on the contrary, the control of the world finance, which has been for a century the monopoly of the British capitalists, had been to a great extent transferred to the hands of the American capitalists who cannot be called to have reached the period of decay and disintegration as yet. In order to consolidate its newly acquired world-power, the American capitalist class inclines towards keeping temporarily away from the infectious ruins of Europe. Thus, the British bourgeoisie is the supreme ruler of the Old World, and the backbone of the capitalist order.

Now, where lies the source of strength of the British bourgeoisie? Judging from the industrial conditions obtaining in the British Isles at the present moment it would appear that if its resources were limited to the productivity of those islands and the power of consumption of continental Europe, the capitalist

order in Britain certainly stands on the very brink of collapse. But despite all its chronic contradictions and the difficulties it is having in reconstituting the industrial fabric of the home country on the pre-war basis, the capitalist class of Britain proves to be quite firm in its power. It still succeeds in deceiving a part and coercing another of the proletariat. The possession of the vast non-European empire, and the control over the newly created economic dependency to which continental Europe has been reduced, render British capital a very wide scope of action, thus enabling it to maintain its position at home and incidentally securing its international power. Economic and industrial development of the rich and thickly populated countries of the East would supply new vigour to Western capital. There are great possibilities in these countries which will provide cheap labour-power and new markets not to be exhausted very soon. Therefore the destruction of its monopolist right of exploitation in the vast Eastern colonial empire is a vital factor in the final and successful overthrow of the capitalist order in Europe.

3. In view of the fact that the power of international capital is rooted all through the globe, anything less than a world-wide revolution would not bring about the end of capitalist order, and triumph of the proletariat in Europe. The struggle of the European proletariat must be aided by the revolutionary action of the toiling masses of other lands subjugated by the same power viz. Capitalist imperialism. In its struggle to get out of the inevitable vicious circle, capitalism developed itself into imperialism, thus bringing extensive markets and huge armies of colonial workers under its domination. By converting the peasants and artisans of the subject countries into agricultural and industrial proletariat, imperialism brought into existence another force which is destined to contribute to its destruction. This being the case, the overthrow of the capitalist order in Europe, which to a great extent rests on its imperial extension, will be achieved not alone by the advanced proletariat of Europe, but with the conscious co-operation of the workers and other revolutionary elements in those colonial and subject countries which afford the greatest economic and military

support to the imperial capital and which are the most developed economically, industrially and politically.

4. Therefore, the Communist International in its task of mobilizing the forces of the World Revolution, should not limit its field of activity only in the countries of Europe and the United States of America. While undoubtedly it is the proletariat of the industrial countries of Europe and America which stands as the vanguard of the armies of the World Revolution, the historical phenomenon should not be overlooked that the toiling masses of the most advanced non-European countries are also destined to play a role in the act of freeing the world from the domination of imperialist capital. This historic role of the masses of the most advanced non-European countries consists of (1) raising the standard of revolt against foreign imperialism simultaneously with the revolutionary action of Western proletariat and (2) fighting the native land-owning class and bourgeoisie. Thus attacked from both sides, imperialism will have no possible way out of the vicious circle of its own creation. Deprived of the possibility of creating new markets by economically developing countries like China, India etc. it will not be able to recover from the effects of over-production in the home countries.

The great countries of the East have become an integral part of the capitalist world; battles against capitalism have begun and are going to be fought there. This is the result of the historic development of imperialism.

## II

5. The point of view that the peoples of the East, because, in general, they are not on the same economic and political level with those of the West, can be reckoned as one and the same unit with identical problems to solve, is erroneous, since it lacks the foundation of fact. It is a mistake to think that a uniform policy can be formulated to guide the activities of the Communist International in all the countries beyond a given geographical limit. The Eastern countries vary greatly in their political, economic, industrial and social conditions : conse-

quently the different oriental peoples have different problems to solve. Therefore a certain definite line of policy and tactics cannot be laid down to be followed rigidly in all Eastern countries. The conditions obtaining in the various countries should be carefully studied in order to ascertain which social class is historically and circumstantially destined to be revolutionary in the present moment as well as in the immediate future, since in such a revolutionary social class is to be found the natural ally of the Western proletariat in its fight for the overthrow of the capitalist order of society. Or in other words, in order to mobilize the anti-imperialist forces effectually in the Oriental countries, the Communist International has to look for and base its activities on that social class which historically does belong or is destined to belong to its own ranks.

6. Whereas in the 'Musalman countries of the Near and Middle' East the religious fanaticism of the ignorant masses and the anti-foreign sentiments of the land owning middle-class can be counted upon as a force for the undermining of imperialism, these elements no longer possess the same significance in a country like India owing to the radical economic and industrial transformation that has taken place there in the last two decades. Imperial capital has just touched the surface of the Near and Middle Eastern countries;—the economic structure of the society is still predominantly feudal and the influence of the clergy is strong. But in India, which since considerable time ago, has been brought fully under the control and exploitation of capital mainly imperial and partly native (the latter has been growing very fast in the last years), feudalism has been destroyed not by means of a violent revolution but by its long contact with modern political and economic institutions which are the reflex of the most highly developed capitalist state. There has come to existence in India a native bourgeoisie, which more than 30 years ago began its historical struggle for the conquest of political power from the foreign ruler, and a proletariat, including a huge landless peasantry, which is growing in number and class consciousness in proportion to the rapid industrialization of the country.

Consequently, the revolutionary movement in India today does not rest on the religious fanaticism of the ignorant masses which is fast loosing its potentiality owing to the economic transformation of the society, nor does it rest on the petty bourgeois sentimental nationalism which is built on the imaginary unity of interest of the entire people not taking into consideration the class division which is becoming more and more clearly defined every day. In India and other countries of the same political and economic condition, the liberal bourgeoisie, which stands at the front of the national democratic movement, is a revolutionary factor in so far as it carries on its historic struggle against the imperial ruler for the right of exploiting the native resources and native labour. But this revolutionary character of the bourgeoisie is temporary, since as soon as the foreign political domination will be overthrown by a mass-revolt, it will turn against the working class and will use all violent measures in order to thwart further march of the revolution in the name of representative government and national defence. It is also possible that the weak native bourgeoisie will find it more profitable to sell itself out to its imperialist peer in return for such change in the political administration of the country as will provide it with wider scope and opportunity for developing as a class. Thus, the rapidly growing proletariat including the masses of landless peasantry is the principal social class which constitutes the foundation of the revolution, in an Oriental country like India.

Therefore the activities of the Communist International in the economically and industrially advanced countries of the East should consist of the formation of such political parties as are capable of developing and directing the revolutionary movement according to the objective conditions. Such parties will be the apparatus of the Communist International :—through them the peoples of the East will be unified in their respective countries to fight against the foreign imperialism, and they will lead the fight further on for economic and social emancipation of the working class against the native bourgeoisie as soon it takes the place of the foreign exploiter.

7. The bourgeoisie of the subject and dominated countries will serve temporarily the purpose of a weapon against imperialism, but it cannot be relied upon. In the East the forces of the World Revolution,— the forces on which the activities of the Communist International should be based,—are to be found in poor peasantry in those countries where feudalism still exists and among the proletariat and agrarian workers in those where machine industry has been introduced and the major portion of the population has been brought directly under the domination of modern capitalism, either foreign or native. The first stages of the revolution all over the East are bound to be a great upheaval against the foreign imperialism, but it will be headed by the most revolutionary social class according to the economic development of the respective countries. Therefore in organizing this upheaval different tactics will have to be adopted in different countries.

For instance in India, a country directly ruled by foreign imperialism and needing political independence for free social development, it has not been practicable to unify the entire people, or at least a sufficiently large part of it, in a movement for political liberation on the basis of bourgeois nationalism. The foreign imperialism exploits the masses through the agency of the native bourgeoisie and the impotent relics of feudalism; therefore a movement led by the bourgeoisie and actuated by bourgeois economic and political ideology naturally fails to attract the masses to its standard, since it cannot inspire confidence in them; it does not show them a way out of their present miserable existence. But until and unless the masses of the subject population take active and conscious part in the revolutionary movement the foreign imperialism cannot and will not be overthrown only by the action of the bourgeoisie, even if it may succeed in rallying a certain section of the people behind it temporarily fired by sentimental enthusiasm. And it is only the historic struggle for economic emancipation which will unify the exploited class to which belongs the great majority of the people in the subject countries, including even the lower strata of the bourgeoisie.

8. Religio-political movements like Pan-Islamism cannot be any longer counted upon as a force against imperialism. Today, under the domination of imperialist capital and thanks to the progressiveness of the rising native bourgeoisie the so-called Muslim world has become a thing of the past:— it has ceased to be a social unit. It exists only in the imagination of the fanatics, and the idea serves the ambition of the ruling dynasties and classes of the Mahomedan countries. Thus, Pan-Islamism, which once had a certain revolutionary character, in so far as it could foment a mass upheaval, finds itself rested today only on the most reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements. The Khans, Mullahs and even the progressive Mussalman merchants and capitalists of the East find in the bankrupt idea of Pan-Islamism a very convenient means of exploiting the ignorant masses. Such being its character at the present moment, Pan-Islamism stands more on the side of imperialism than for the cause of liberation. In the economically and industrially backward countries of the Near and Middle East the poor peasantry and handicraft workers should be organized to fight against imperialism and its henchmen, the native landlords and merchant class.



## Article on India\*

"While reading news from India, one unconsciously remembers Eireland trembles. In both the places there is equally unmeasureable feeling, similar blindness, similar foolishness and similar rough handling of human feelings. As in Eireland of the bygone years, so in India of today, a moment has come when the best that British parliamentarism can present in the field of reforms has been tentatively refused by the people concerned. As in 1914 Eireland was on the verge of agreement with "Home Rule" act in the form it was presented, so too the project of reforms of Montague was in general agreed upon by India at the moment of its appearance. But nobody today hopes for the success of the reforms of Montague. They have lost all value for India. At the moment of their introduction they are as dead as the old British "act of Home Rule".

Objective political conditions in India are very quickly changing. Now in big cities and industrial centres proletariat exists, which often and often runs to strikes and is organised in permanent trade unions. In Punjab, in spite of military rule, whole population is disturbed and is putting forward extreme left demands. In some regions the elections are now being boycotted, by whole classes, whole regions, whole tribes. Muslims as a united mass have refused to take part

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\* This Article was (published in the Bulletin of the Communist International BCI No. 13 of 28 I 1921) with the title 'Eireland-India' and it was a translation from Russian to English.

in the elections. Hindu Sabha (Indiskoe Sabraniye) is thus a representative only of more Conservative and more well-off (zazhitochnoe) layer of the people. But the mood of this conservative part is far from being favourable for Britain.

To this must be added a certain revolutionary character of the decision of the National Congress of India. It, certainly, can be disputed as to how much this Congress is expressive of the desire and mood of the whole country, but that there is a representation of really politically conscious section of India, is quite probable. In the period of apathy and peace this part may appear to be definitely insignificant, but in the period of danger the number of its members grows endlessly. At the present moment Congress has gathered round it a very wide mass of the people of India.

This conscious part of Indian people has gone far to the left and adopted Gandhi's tactics of "non-cooperation" and boycott. It is proposed to boycott not only Government and elected organs but all trade and goods imported from England and also not to work for British capitalist-plantation owners.

Reasons which have metamorphosed good relations and Montague reforms into revolutionary desire of their boycott are certainly not a secret. Among them a big role is played by unlimited imperialist policies in Turkey and Iran. This has enraged the Muslims and has formed them into a unity with the Hindus and into an anti-British force. This pious wrath has been further sharpened by the speech of Isher who proposed the utilisation of Indian army as a permanent force for British economic imperialism in the middle-east. Peace in Turkey with division of Turkey as the base proved to be the provocation insulting the Indians and the proposals of permanent use of Indian Army of its support further sharply increased the hatred for England. Absence of any steps towards a trial of general O'Dyer for mass shooting of the polution in Amritsar is one more reason.

The whole imperialist politics of Curzon in middle-east was wrong, based partially on lust for oil and partially on the hatred of Russia. If it is permitted that an army commander could

shoot 400 unarmed and defenceless Indians and after that could avoid coming up for trial, and if there is no law which could put the British civil and military administration in India under reins, then the rule of London over this country has no justification.”

### **Refuse Paying Taxes**

Later Congress unanimously adopted a resolution presented by C.R. Das which reads :

“Because, according to the Congress opinion, the present Government existing in India has not justified the confidence of the people of the country, and because of the fact that Indian people strongly decided to establish “Swaraj” (self-rule) in their homeland therefore the resolution supporting boycotts, strikes is approved. This resolution was passed in the special session of the Calcutta Congress, the present Congress announces that the above mentioned Congress which, on one side, included the refusal to cooperate, and on the other refusal to pay taxes, must be partially or totally translated into practice by a date decided by the Indian National Congress or AICC”

### **Boycott of England**

This resolution later puts forward in detail all the means for reaching the goal of boycott and boycott-strikes. Parents must not send their children up to the age of 16 in state or state-subsidised schools, they should boycott the courts, trials should be conducted by local people of trade union cadres. Schools should participate in boycott movements and decide the ways of their participation. People devoted to the national movement should decide how the national institutes of higher learning should participate in the movement. Directors of Government Schools and their staff are called upon to nationalise their schools. Advocates are requested to stop their practice and devote all their powers to the service of the nation.

For the achievement of economic independence Congress calls on the traders and industrialists to boycott foreign goods and popularise handlooms and hand-spinning wheels and khaddar and the whole nation is called upon to give maximum possible sacrifice for the national movement.

Summing up the achievements of the activity of the National Congress, its president in his presidential address, by the way, said, "Resolution of boycott of the British and the refusal to pay taxes, expresses the united will of the people who are trying with all their powers to reach their goal. Resolution adopted is the practical basis for future struggle. No repressions can frighten the Indians. They will advance further and further on this road to self-control and self-sacrifice".

Ben Spur and Col. Wedgwood, representatives of the British Labour Party were present on the 30th December session of the Congress. In reply to the welcome addressed of the President of the Congress Spur said, "British Labour Party hopes that all the people who constitute the British empire today will opt for remaining in it. But the party feels that the final solution of this problem should be made according to the wishes of the people themselves."

Underlining the desire of the British workers to see India free, he also pointed out forceful unanimity of the Indian National struggle coinciding with the rise in the Indian labour movement.

### **Boycott of the Elections**

When the elections began for the new local administrative organs in the United Provinces, Gandhi, the leader of the freedom movement of India, came to Allahabad two days before the elections. The extremists had already prepared the ground for him by increased agitation among the local peasants. On the eve of the elections in Oudh, the centre of the agrarian movement, a meeting was fixed for the peasants. Huge crowds of 30-25 thousands came there from all places in order to express their love for Gandhi and hear him

speaking, promising freedom from slavery to the oppressed people of the land. His arrival led to unusual enthusiasm among those assembled in the meeting. With the prophetic style characteristic of him, he blessed them and then delivered a long speech.

“Next day”—writes the Times Correspondent—“showed what a big influence Gandhi has over the masses. We visited the court room where elections were to have taken place. Election Commission sat by the table, the voters’ list was lying before it, it has the ballot papers. But from 8 in the morning to late evening not a single voter turned up to cast his vote. No where boycott had so far achieved such success”.

Gandhi announced that his followers undoubtedly would have achieved victory in these elections. But no victory in the elections can be compared with that grandiose demonstration which the people organised by their conscious absence from participation in the elections.

“Indian people-said Gandhi-will not fall a prey to the illusions of participation in fake administrative organisations which have the object of further enslavement of the Indian people. Indian patriotism has destroyed these machinations all over the country. India at last has demonstrated her spirit, by passing through the fire test and suffering. But not by force, but exclusively through the ‘power of the spirit’ India will achieve independence, and after becoming free from the damaging influence of British domination and western civilization, will follow the ancient wisdom of the Vedas and will achieve that peace and tranquility which she had before the foreign occupation”.

In answer to a question, “Is there any antagonism between Muslim Indian and Indians belonging to other religions?” Gandhi pointed out to his “brother” Shaukat and said, “Between my brother and myself there has never been a shadow of misunderstanding during many months of our joint life and work. While he remains a staunch Muslim and I, a devoted follower of the Buddha. He eats meat while I am

a vegetarian. He believes in the power of arms while I condemn all types of force. But what all these divergences in point of view of people matter who have a heart beating for the betterment of India?"

Negative approach to the use of force on the side of Gandhi has done much for keeping his Mohammedan friends from following the path of open rebellion.

### **Against Collaborator of London**

Member of the State Council, Shrinivas Shastri, tried to speak in Bombay at a meeting which was organised under the Chairmanship of the Minister of peoples' education, but was not allowed to do so and the meeting did not take place.

### **8000 workers on strike**

8000 workers of wagon workshop of West Indian Railways in Lilluah (near Calcutta) stopped work, demanding an increase in wages. Police has been called for the protection of the workshop.

### **"Disturbances among workers and peasants"**

Among a few thousand workers engaged in Jute Industry in Naihati near Calcutta, on Friday the 4th of February, after a visit to this place by the leader of freedom movement Gandhi, big disturbances took place.

A clash between the workers and police took place as a result of which 2 policemen were killed and 10 injured. When additional forces arrived the rebels dispersed and took their injured with them.

Among the peasants of Oudh the disturbances are continuing. Agitators are calling the people to completely boycott the government and not to take part in the elections. At one place a crowd of 1000 when came to know about the arrest of their leaders went to the railway station so as to stop the train in which he was to be taken away. All the thousands of persons lied down on the rails and no promises from the side of the

Government Officers could remove them from the railway lines. Police, which was called at the spot, was met by the crowd by stones. Police opened fire. There are injured on both the sides.

### **Eastern Question**

In his lecture on the tasks of the Communist International in the east, Com. Sokolnikov points out, first of all, the fact that sympathy of the bourgeoisie-feudal classes of the east towards the Soviet Union is very unstable. This sympathy has been aroused by the hatred of the allies, but this hatred is significantly weaker than the fear of the toiling masses of their own countries. This explains the fact that our military allies in the east on the first easy opportunity enter into agreements with our military enemies—the allied powers.

Coming to the question as to who is the real carrier of revolution in the east, we must first of all discard the point of view as if the east is something unified and a whole. As is well known, capitalism introduces uniformities in the social relations of different countries, but nevertheless east is still almost untouched by capitalism. Big industry is developed only in India and here the carriers of the national-democratic revolution and its leaders will be, undoubtedly, only the proletariat. About other countries of the near east, Persia, Bukhara, Afghanistan etc. it can be said in general that in these places the oppressed classes are the peasantry and revolution must have an agrarian character. In our work in the east we must study in detail all the specialities of the social relations of every separate country and avoid jargonisation (Shablon).

Discussion of the report (doklad) of Com. Sokolnikov is postponed till the next meeting of the ECCI and floor was given to Com. Rosmer for an urgent announcement about economic boycott of Spain.

(Report of the session of ECCI) BCI. FT

### **Hunger and failure of harvest**

India Office has published the following telegram of the Viceroy of India :

One more province has been declared as unlucky in relation to food. It has been decided to telegraph to London every week the reports about the situation in famine affected areas of Agra, Oudh, Punjab, NWFP, Central India, Central Provinces, Bombay, Hyderabad and part of Madras, which have been affected by drought. Drought is continuing.

The areas of Ahmadnagar in Bombay Presidency have also been declared as affected. Lack of food is felt in Mandlay, Durg, Bilashpur, Jugulkor, Buldan, in the Akali areas, in the Central provinces and Nasik area of Bombay Presidency.

Hunger in Hyderabad, which is continuing since last year, has increased. Strong need is felt in the areas of Bellari and Alentapur in Madras Presidency.

Price of rice is showing very weak tendency of reduction. Prices of all other commodities are either stationary at the earlier higher level or have increased.

As a result of the early ending of monsoons, spring sowings have been strongly reduced. This situation affected negatively the autumn sowing.

In Bellari social work for helping the starving people has began; help is given to the starving in the region of Deoria in Bihar province and in Orissa. Lack of forage is felt in parts of Pubjab, Central India, Central Provinces, Bombay and Hyderabad.

Total number of starving people who are getting state aid has reached 77,263''.



## **Message of the Communist International to the Gaya Congress**

To the All India National Congress, Gaya, India.  
Representative of the Indian People <sup>1</sup>

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International sends to you its heartiest greetings. We are chiefly interested in the struggle of the Indians to free themselves from British domination. In this historic struggle you have the fullest sympathy and support of the revolutionary proletarian masses of the imperialist countries including Great Britain.

We communists are quite aware of the predatory nature of western imperialism, which brutally exploits the peoples of the East and has held them forcibly in a backward economic state, in order that the insatiable greed of capitalism can be satisfied. The infamous methods by which British imperialism sucks the life blood of the Indian people are well known. They cannot be condemned too strongly; nor will simple condemnation be of any practical value. British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force; therefore it can and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution. We are (not ?) in favour of resorting to violence if it can be helped; but for self-defence, the people of India must adopt violent means, without which the foreign domination based upon violence cannot be ended. The people of India are engaged in this great revolutionary struggle. The Communist International is wholeheartedly with them.

The economic, social and cultural progress of the Indian people demands the complete separation of India from

imperialist Britain. To realise this separation is the goal of revolutionary nationalism. This goal, however, cannot be attained by negotiation nor by peaceful means. Imperial connection in any form stands for nothing less than the control of the destinies of the Indian people by and for the interests of the British ruling class; at best this control will be exercised in conjunction with the native upper classes. But the control will be there, obstructing the freedom of the nation.

Dislocation of world capitalist economy, coupled with the strengthening of the world revolutionary nationalist movement caused by the awakening of the expropriated masses, is forcing imperialism to change its old methods of exploitation. It endeavours to win over the cooperation of the propertied upper classes by making them concessions. From the very beginning of its history the British government found a reliable ally in the feudal landowning class, whose dissolution was prevented by obstructing the growth of higher means of production. Feudalism and its relics are the bulwarks of reaction; economic forces, that give rise to the national consciousness of the people, cannot be developed without undermining their social foundation. So the forces that are inimical to British imperialism are, at the same time, dangerous to the security of the feudal lords and modern landed aristocracy. Hence the loyalty of the latter to the foreign ruler.

The immediate economic interests of the propertied upper classes, as well as the prosperous intellectuals engaged either in liberal professions or high government offices are too closely interlinked with the established order to permit them to favour a revolutionary change. Therefore, they preach evolutionary nationalism whose programme is "self-government within the empire" to be realised gradually by peaceful and legal means.

This programme of constitutional democracy will not be opposed by the British government for ever, since it does not interfere with the final authority of imperialism. On the contrary its protagonists are the potential pillars of imperial domination.

The policy of liberal imperialism heralded in 1909 by the Morley-Minto reforms and inaugurated in 1919 by the

introduction of the Government of India Act will culminate sooner or later in home rule or dominion status for India. The repetition of the fiasco of the Irish Free State and Egyptian "independence" can be expected in India. Those who look upon any such eventuality as a solution of the national question are to be counted as the henchmen of imperialism. The movement led by the National Congress must rid itself of all such elements and be free from any illusion about a "change of heart" on the part of the British. The Indian people must be free or be crushed to death by British imperialism; there is no middle course. And the people of India will never liberate themselves from the present slavery without a sanguinary revolutionary struggle.

The social-basis of a revolutionary nationalist movement cannot be all inclusive, because economic reasons do not permit all the classes to participate in it. Only those sections of the people, therefore, whose economic interests cannot be reconciled with imperialist exploitation under any makeshift arrangement, constitute the backbone of your movement. These sections embrace the overwhelming majority of the nation, since they include the bankrupt middle classes, pauperised peasantry and the exploited workers. To the extent that these objectively revolutionary elements are led away from the influences of social reaction, and are free from vacillating and compromising leadership, tied up spiritually and materially with the feudal aristocracy and capitalist upper classes, to that extent grows the strength of the nationalist movement.

The last two years were a period of mighty revolutionary upheaval in India. The awakening of the peasantry and of the proletariat struck terror in the heart of the British. But the leadership of the National Congress failed the movement in the intensely revolutionary situation.

The relation of the Communist International with the struggle of the oppressed people is inspired by revolutionary idealism and based upon mutual interests. Our sympathy and support are not confined to empty phrases couched in sweet words. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of India in their

struggle against imperialism; therefore we will fail in our revolutionary duty if we do not point out to you the mistakes that weaken the struggle and harm the cause of Indian independence.

In leading the struggle for national liberation the Indian National Congress should keep the following points always in view :

- (1) that the normal development of the people cannot be assured unless imperialist domination is completely destroyed.
- (2) that no compromise with the British rulers will improve the position of the majority of the nation,
- (3) that the British domination cannot be overthrown without a violent revolution, and
- (4) that the workers and peasants are alone capable of carrying the revolution to victory.

Therefore, in order to declare its complete freedom from all connection with the reactionary upper classes, the National Congress should categorically declare that its political programme is the establishment of a democratic republic, completely independent of any foreign control. The vast majority of the nation, that is, the toiling masses, will rally round this programme, since the present condition cannot be improved without a radical change in the existing system. Tireless and courageous agitation has to be carried on to win the masses for the cause of national liberation. The present spontaneous mass upheaval provides a very fertile field of propaganda. The necessity of developing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses demands the adoption of an economic programme, in addition to the political programme, of a republic to be established through a revolution. By leading the rebellious poor peasantry against the reactionary and loyalist landed aristocracy, the Congress will on the one hand strike its roots deeply into the masses, and, on the other, will assail the very bedrock of British rule. The native army, which maintains British domination in India, is recruited from among the poor peasantry. So a programme of agrarian

revolution will win the native troops to the cause of national freedom.

In conclusion we express our confidence in the ultimate success of your cause which is the destruction of British imperialism by the revolutionary might of the masses.

Let us assure you again of the support and cooperation of the advanced proletariat of the world in this historic struggle of the Indian people.

Down with British imperialism! Long live the free people of India!

With fraternal greetings,

Humbert-Droz,  
*Secretary,*

Presidium of the Fourth Congress  
of the Communist International.

## Programme of National Liberation

### THE PROGRAMME\*

Our movement has reached a stage when the adoption of a definite programme of national liberation as well as of action can no longer be deferred. A programme of national liberation must be formulated in order to state the position of those who do not believe in halfway and the so-called "evolutionary" methods advocated by the compromising liberals. The ambiguous term *swaraj* is open to many definitions, and in fact it has been defined in various ways according to the interests and desires of the different elements participating in our movement. Such a vague objective is certainly not conducive to the strengthening of a movement : on the contrary it makes for weakness. Therefore a militant programme of action has become indispensable in order to mobilise under the banner of the National Congress all the available revolutionary forces. The nation is not a homogeneous whole: it is divided into classes with diverse and often conflicting interests. All these various social classes struggle for their respective interests. They all believe that national liberation will remove their grievances. Therefore the programme of the National Congress, which is not a cohesive political party, but the traditional organ of our national struggle, cannot be according to the interests of one certain class. The National Congress is a coalition of all forces oppressed by foreign domination; therefore its programme must be a coalition programme.

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\*Submitted by M. N. Roy to Gaya Congress in 1922

First of all, we must define what form of national self-government is needed for the welfare of the majority of the nation; then is to be formulated the methods of the struggle which will lead to the realisation of this national self-government.

### **Programme of National Liberation**

It is a well known fact that the domination of foreign imperialism has led to the economic ruin, industrial stagnation, social degeneration and intellectual backwardness of the people of India. The woeful tale of the unlimited exploitation and heartless suppression suffered by the Indian people at the hand of the British rulers has soiled the pages of history. The basis of our national movement is the necessity of the Indian people to free itself from this slavery. So long as the political state power is controlled by the foreign imperialist, no substantial economic and social progress will be permitted to the masses of the population. Therefore, the first and foremost objective of the national struggle is to secure the control of the national government by the elected representatives of the people. But this cannot be achieved with the sanction and benevolent protection of the imperialist overlords as the renegade patriots of the Liberal League think, because any measure of self-government or home rule or swaraj under the imperial hegemony of British will not amount to anything. Such steps are calculated only to deceive the people. They are camouflage. As the leader of the struggle for national liberation, the Congress must boldly challenge such measures and declare in unmistakable terms that its goal is nothing short of a completely independent national government based on the democratic principle of universal suffrage.

### **Theory of Equal Partnership a Myth**

The theory of "equal partnership in the British Commonwealth" is but a gilded version of imperialism. Only the

upper classes of our society can find any consolation in it, because the motive behind this theory is to secure the support of the native landowning and capitalist classes by means of economic and political concessions, allowing them a junior partnership in the exploitation of the country. Such concessions will promote the interests, though in a limited way, of the upper classes, leaving the vast majority of the people in political subjugation and economic servitude. The apostles of "peaceful and constitutional" means are nothing but accomplices of the British in keeping the Indian nation in perpetual enslavement. It is needless to point out that England did not conquer India in order to "civilise" us, so to believe that the Indian people will attain the state of complete political autonomy under the guidance of the benign British rule is simply to entertain an illusion. But those believing in co-operation with the British government are too hardheaded businessmen to be under any illusion. If they advocate the policy of "peaceful & constitutional" means, it is because such a policy is more conducive to the interests of their class than a sudden radical change in the political administration of the country.

### **Our Landlord and Capitalist Class**

The landowners are interested in the security of their estates and preservation of their right to suck the blood of the peasantry by rackrenting and innumerable other forms of exploitation. Any government offering them this security will win their loyal support. The nationality of the rulers will make little difference. The moneyed upper classes seek expansion in the industrial and commercial field. Any government providing facilities for this expansion will have their support and cooperation. If the British government will insist on the old policy of obstructing the industrial development of the country, our capitalist classes will militate in the nationalist ranks. But convenience of exploitation, as well as exigencies resulting from the disastrous effects



of the world war today demand a change in the method of imperialist economics. Ever increasing popular discontent forces the British ruler to seek an alliance with some powerful native element, which will find it profitable to help maintain a government preserving "law and order". It offers economic concessions and political privileges in consideration for such help. Thus the landowning and capitalist classes find it possible to have their interests protected and aspirations satisfied within the framework of imperialist suzerainty.

Their property rights protected, and the avenues of their economic development open under the British rule, the landowning and capitalist classes have no reason to quarrel with the former. In fact their economic interests demand peaceful conditions, which are enforced under imperial coercion. They are afraid that a sudden change in the political status of the country will disturb the "peace and order" so indispensable for the security of property and prosperity of commerce and industry. A clear programme of national liberation cannot be carried through without risking a revolutionary action of the masses, who may not be so willing to go back to their socio-economic slavery after conquering the political power for the native upper classes. In order to avoid these unwelcome possibilities, the landowning and capitalist classes prefer a peaceful and gradual progress. They find it wise to take as much as can be got with the least danger to themselves.

This policy of caution and compromise, however, leaves the interests of the Indian people out of consideration. It is calculated to secure and promote the interests of the thin upper strata of the people. Therefore, it goes without saying that the National Congress must declare that the realisation of the programme of the Liberal League, or any other programme fundamentally of a similar nature, does not bring the Indian nation as a whole any nearer to freedom. Because under "equal partnership in the commonwealth" or "dominion self-government" or "home rule within the

British empire'' the Indian people will still continue to be under British domination, which will function with the aid and connivance of the native capitalist class.

### **No Change of Heart**

Those preaching the doctrine of ''change of heart'' on the part of the British rulers fail to dissociate themselves clearly from such halfway measures. Such a doctrine admits the possibility of reconciling the interests of the Indian people with those of imperialism, consequently it is a dangerous doctrine, and the Congress must be freed from it. This ambiguity of its position and the vagueness of its objective have contributed to the vacillation and weakness that characterised the activities of the Congress during the last twelve months. A determined fight which is required to conquer national independence for the Indian people is conditional upon a clearly defined programme, and only such a programme will draw the masses of the people into the national struggle as it takes into consideration the vital factors affecting the lives of the people.

Therefore, the Indian National Congress declares the following to be its PROGRAMME OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND RECONSTRUCTION :

(1) Complete national independence, separated from all imperial connection and free from all foreign supervision.

(2) Election of the national assembly by universal suffrage. The sovereignty of the people will be vested in the national assembly which will be the supreme authority.

(3) Establishment of the federated republic of India.

### **Social and Economic Programme**

The principles which will guide the economic and social life of the liberated nation are as follows :

(1) Abolition of landlordism. All large estates will be confiscated without any compensation. Ultimate proprietorship of the land will be vested in the national state. Only those actually engaged in agricultural industry will be allowed to hold land. No tax farming will be allowed.

(2) Land rent will be reduced to a fixed minimum with the object to improve the economic condition of the cultivator. State agriculture co-operative banks will be established to provide credit to the peasant and to free him from the clutches of the money-lender and speculating trader.

(3) State aid will be given to introduce modern methods in agriculture. Through the state co-operative banks agricultural machineries will be sold or lent to the cultivator on easy terms.

(4) All indirect taxes will be abolished and a progressive income tax will be imposed upon incomes exceeding 500 rupees a month.

(5) Nationalisation of public utilities. Mines, railways, telegraphs and inland waterways will be owned and operated by the state under the control of workers' committees, not for profit, but for the use and benefit of the nation.

(6) Modern industries will be developed with aid and under the supervision of the state.

(7) Minimum wages in all the industries will be fixed by legislation.

(8) Eight-hour day. Eight hours a day for five and half days a week will be fixed by law as the maximum duration of work for male adults. Special conditions will be laid down for woman and child labour.

(9) Employers will be obliged by law to provide for a certain standard of comfort as regards housing, working conditions, medical aid, etc. for the workers.

(10) Protective legislation will be passed about old age, sickness and unemployment insurance in all the industries.

(11) Labour organisations will be given a legal status and the workers' right to strike to enforce their demands will be recognised.

(12) Workers' councils will be formed in all the big industries to defend the rights of labour. These councils will have the protection of the state in exercising their functions.

(13) Profit sharing will be introduced in all big industries.

(14) Free and compulsory education. Education for both boys and girls will be free and compulsory in the primary grades and free as far as the secondary. Technical and vocational schools will be established with state aid.

(15) The state will be separated from all religious creeds, and the freedom of belief and worship will be guaranteed.

(16) Full social economic and political rights will be enjoyed by the women.

(17) No standing army will be maintained, but the entire people will be armed to defend the national freedom. A national militia will be organised and every citizen will be obliged to undergo a certain period of military training.

### **How to Reach Our Goal**

The aims and aspirations of the great majority of the Indian people are embodied in this programme, the realisation of which will bring progress and prosperity resulting from national freedom within the reach of all the classes. Now the object before us is clear. Everybody knows what he is fighting for. Swaraj is no longer a vague abstraction open to any interpretation, nor is it a "mental state". Swaraj—national independence—which still continues to be the summary of our programme, represents a clear picture of the national life breathing in the healthy atmosphere of freedom.

The goal fixed, we must now find the ways and means for reaching it. It goes without saying that a bitter and protracted struggle separates us from the goal we are striving for. The "civilising" character of British imperialism will be tested by the brutal resistance it will put up against the Indian people in its attempt to realise a programme which proposes to raise India to the status of any free civilised nation. The patriotism of the liberals will be measured by the adhesion they give to this programme of ours, a programme which does not injure them but requires of every sincere Indian nationalist the courage and

determination to struggle against the foreign ruler, and which aims not at the economic development of and comfortable position for a few, but for freedom, progress and prosperity for all. We know, however, what to expect from both quarters, British imperialism will never "change its heart" and our upper classes will never risk a comfortable present and a promising future assured to them, for real freedom to the nation. Our immediate task, therefore, is to involve in the struggle all those elements whose welfare demands the realisation of our programme.

### **Analysis of Our Forces**

Now in a fight it is indispensable to make a correct estimate of the available and reliable forces and to mobilise them so as to have their fullest might brought to bear upon the situation. Great masses of our national army are just on the point of awakening. Their understanding is still limited and their vision not far-reaching. The abstract conception of national liberation leaves them indifferent, nor does the picture of a happy and prosperous life far ahead appeal strongly to their imagination. They are wrapped up in more immediate affairs, those affecting their everyday life. In order to lead them step by step in the great struggle we must take up their immediate problems. These however cannot be solved unless there is a radical politico-economic change, but by standing shoulder to shoulder with them in their struggle against immediate grievances we will help them develop their revolutionary consciousness. We will convince them in actual struggle how their everyday life is bound up with the destiny of the entire nation.

It is a known fact that intensified economic exploitation has at last exhausted the patience of the Indian masses and shaken their traditional resignation. During the last years they have repeatedly demonstrated their will and readiness to fight. This rebelliousness of the masses is the solid foundation on which the activities of the National Congress should be based. To develop this spontaneous revolt against

unbearable conditions, therefore, will be to strengthen the national struggle. With the purpose of developing all the forces oppressed and exploited under the present order and to lead them in the struggle for national liberation, the Indian National Congress adopts the following ACTION PROGRAMME :

(1) To lead the rebellious poor peasantry in their struggle against the excesses of landlordism and high rents. This task will be accomplished by organising militant peasants' unions which will demand: (a) abolition of feudal rights and dues, repeal of the permanent settlement and talukdari system; (b) confiscation of large estates; (c) management of the confiscated estates by councils of the cultivators; (d) reduction of land rent, irrigation tax, road cess, etc.; (e) fixed tenures; (f) no ejection; (g) abolition of indirect taxation; (h) low prices; (i) annulment of all the mortgages held by money-lenders etc.

(2) To back the demands of the peasantry by organising country-wide mass demonstrations with slogan of "non-payment of rent and taxes"

(3) To organise mass resistance against high prices, increase of railway fare, postage, salt tax and other indirect taxation.

(4) To struggle for the recognition of labour unions and the workers' right to strike in order to enforce their demands.

(5) To secure an eight-hour day, minimum wage and better housing for the industrial workers.

(6) To back up these demands by mass strikes to be developed into a general strike at every available opportunity.

(7) To support all strikes politically and financially out of the Congress fund.

(8) To agitate for the freedom of press, platform and assembly.

(9) To organise tenants' strikes against high house rents in the cities.

(10) To build up a country-wide organisation of national volunteers.

(11) To organise strikes of the clerks and employees in the government and commercial offices for higher salaries.

(12) To enter the councils with the object of wrecking them.

(13) To organise mass demonstrations for the release of political prisoners.

### **The Final Step**

The realisation of this programme of action, every clause of which corresponds to the immediate interests of one or another section of the people, will increase the fighting capacity of the nation as a whole. The national army will be drilled, so to say, ready for action. Every class will find the Congress striving for its welfare. In face of a gigantic mass movement thus organised and involving larger and larger sections of the population, the authority of the government will break down. Non-cooperation of the productive elements of society will paralyse the life of the country, thus dealing a death-blow to the government. Inauguration of the campaign of nation-wide civil disobedience will precipitate the final stage of our struggle to be crowned inevitably by the conquest of an independent national existence, in which the people of India will have the opportunity of progressing in social, economic and intellectual realms, in accordance with the principles contained in our programme of national reconstruction.

*December 1922*

*(One Year of Non-cooperation, Chapter X.)*

### **OPEN LETTER TO C. R. DAS\***

The 37th annual session of the National Congress at Gaya marked the close of an historic period in our struggle for

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\*Sent by M. N. Roy (C. R. Das was the President of Gaya Congress in 1922)

liberation. The social tendencies that constituted the innate weakness of our movement during the last two years still reign supreme in the Congress. The consequences are easily to be anticipated. Non-cooperation as a political force is dead, that is that orthodox brand of non-cooperation which makes religion out of politics and has turned the traditional organ of national struggle (the Congress) into a prayer hall and conclave of theologians. This brand of non-cooperation is dead, notwithstanding the fact that the die-hards of this school won the day at Gaya. It sounds paradoxical; but it is true none the less.

Although Gaya failed to be as dramatic as Surat, the result has hardly been otherwise. The reactionary elements have gained an apparent ascendancy, not by dint of their own merits, but because the opposition failed to marshal its forces in the proper way, and took its stand on an insecure ground. This is, however, a transition period.

After 1907, the impotency of the moderates became palpable and the stalwarts of the old Congress fell willing victims to the "rallying" order of Morley. Of course, it is evident that no such glorious fate awaits the orthodox non-cooperators of the "no-change" party. They may shout at the top of their voices that they do not want such glory; but the truth is that the government wants their co-operation much less than they want government's favour. So the bankruptcy of die-hard Gandhism will be exposed in a different way, if it is still to be exposed. If in the near future there does not appear in the political field a new party with a clearly formulated programme inspired, not by sloppy sentimentalism, but by a revolutionary social outlook and firm grasp of the situation, the Congress under the leadership of the "victorious" no-change party will sink into oblivion and imbecility no less despicable than that overtaking the moderates shortly after the split at Surat. And if such a party does take the field, as is historically inevitable, the apparent triumph of religious quietism in our political movement will be very shortlived and the Congress will be ere long rescued from its rut.



A great crisis has been pressing upon our movement ever since the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress. It would have come to a head probably at Ahmedabad, had not the attention of the country been diverted by the policy of relentless repression, which clapped all the forward-looking leaders, including the president-elect of the Congress, into jail. At last the crisis is over. The Congress has succumbed. The crisis lasted too long and therefore the depression and disintegration have been too great. But the very process of disintegration has at the same time clarified the situation, giving impetus to the energies which will eventually dissipate the depression. New attempts have already been made to resuscitate the Congress. But most of the elements making these attempts are still groping in the dark.

### **Two Ways Ahead**

There are but two ways ahead : reversion to the constitutional democracy of the liberals, or adoption of more revolutionary methods. To choose one of the two ways has been the fundamental issue that gave birth to the controversy that rent the Congress during the last half a year; and it was precisely this problem that had to be solved at Gaya. The victory of the die-hard quietists signifies that the problem still remains unsolved, at least in part. The intellectually bankrupt lower middle class is, on the one hand, debarred from the heavens of constitutional democracy, owing to its economic disability, and on the other hand its reactionary social and religious prejudices give it a counter-revolutionary ideology. It is this social element that still holds the balance of power in the Congress ranks. The eventual overthrow of this pernicious influence is conditional upon a clear grouping in elements in the pro-change party, which today embraces two centripetal forces, one heading towards constitutional democracy in the garb of rationalism, the other inclined towards a revolutionary outlook, but this inclination is still largely sentimental. This confusion in the pro-change camp gave a temporary victory to the tendencies objectively dead, but

which nevertheless can still appeal to the imagination of purely sentimental revolutionaries.

There are two tendencies demanding a change of the Congress programme. There is nothing in common between them except that both demand a change. But the character of the change sought for by one is diametrically opposite to that demanded by the other. This was not made clear at Gaya; hence the defeat of the leftwing led by Chittaranjan Das, which failed to attract under its banner the sentimental revolutionaries in the ranks of the "no-change" party. These elements looked upon the leftwing with suspicion, because the latter failed to stand out separately from the "pro-change" party of the right—the Mahratta radicals who advocated "responsive co-operation". So, it is clear that the orthodox "no-changers" secured not a victory, but a walkover. This state of affairs will not last. The left must part company with the right, and in proportion as it asserts its revolutionary potentiality upon the situation, the centre will collapse. If the social forces destined to lead our movement in the new historical period are not soon mobilised, moderatism in the garb of wordy extremism of the Mahratta radicals will reconquer the political field. This will mean a great setback to the movement. Should this be permitted?

### **The Three Social Elements within The Congress**

There are three distinct social elements operating in the national movement as represented by the Congress, namely, the upper middle class including the intellectuals, the lower middle class (small traders, petty intellectuals etc.) and the masses of workers and peasants. The first stands very close to the co-operating liberals. In fact most of them blundered into the non-cooperation movement, and have always lent a rather half-hearted adhesion to it. Their quarrel consists in that the Reforms Act did not make sufficient provision for the interests of their class. Hence their opposition to the reforms. Today they oppose the non-cooperation programme, not because it is not revolutionary enough to meet the

situation, but because it is not "rational". But there is no such curious thing as a rational revolution, and swaraj can be won only through a revolution. An extension of the reforms, or, at the most something on the model of the Irish Free State or Egyptian independence will satisfy the ambition of this section of our people. They are firm believers in the theories of democracy, social contract, free competition, parliamentarism and all the rest of the paraphernalia of capitalism, which is breaking down under the pressure of its own contradictions all over the world.

The lower middle class, apparently led by the petty intellectuals, but in reality dominated by a reactionary religious and theological ideal, is in an unenviable position. Economically it is totally ruined. It has no hope from the present system. No amount of reforms will affect its position. Therefore it talks about a radical change. But a progressive change will not be beneficial for it either, because it will only drag this class down to the level of proletarians. Hence its frantic antipathy towards modern developments. It would like to see the society hark back to those primitive conditions to which it ascribes the glories of the golden age. The bankrupt lower middle class must have a radical change, but its members are against disturbing the social status quo. Their position is very equivocal.

Neither of these two middle-class elements represents the interests of the third social factor, which constitutes such a vital part of the nation and which in the last two years has played such an important role in the movement. This third factor is the masses of workers and peasants. Everybody, of late, talks about the "masses". But no middle-class party can be expected to fight under the slogan : "Not the Masses for Revolution, but Revolution for the Masses." Middle-class libertarians will never attain such a revolutionary outlook as to look on the working class, not as the pawns in the game, but as the very life of our struggle. Therefore, it is inevitable that the revolutionary energy of the toiling masses, who constitute the vast majority of the

nation and without whose conscious action swaraj cannot be won, will be focused through an independent political party. To raise the standard of this party, the future leader of our struggle for national liberation, is the task objectively undertaken by the leftwing of the pro-change party. It is necessary to face the facts, however unpleasant they may be, we cannot make them non-existent by overlooking them.

### **The Crystallisation of Political Parties within The National Congress**

We must recognise the fact that it is the conflict of class interests that simultaneously strengthens and weakens our movement. This lesson ought to have been learnt by all forward-looking people by this time. In other words, it must have become evident that India is not free from those inexorable laws of history which give rise to great revolutions in particular epochs. The confusion of the last year as well as the present decomposition and process of regrouping of forces within the Congress are brought about by the operation of these laws. Several social elements with discordant interests went into the composition of the non-cooperation movement. There were certain things superficially in common; therefore, they could work in apparent harmony for a certain length of time. But the development of the impelling forces is followed by the clarification of the ideology of the movement. The objective of the respective classes becomes clearer: consequently it becomes impossible for them to remain as integral parts of one and the same cohesive political apparatus. It becomes necessary for each of them to formulate its particular aims and aspirations in the shape of a programme. The Congress has never been a compact political organ reflecting an identical social interest. It has become less so in the last years, when the nationalist movement transcended the limits of the so-called "politically-minded" classes. The movement however cannot be carried further without cohesive political parties as the vanguards of the several social

classes which are objectively antagonistic to the imperialist exploitation. The Congress will serve only as the rallying ground for these nationalist forces, the most revolutionary of which will eventually assume its leadership and bring the struggle for national liberation to the final victory. The present decomposition of the Congress will be followed by the rise of these political parties.

### **The Need for a Revolutionary People's Party**

During the last twelve months, that is, ever since the initial enthusiasm began to subside in the movement, the struggle for power has been going on inside the Congress ranks. The three principal social elements that enter into the composition of the Congress have been struggling to capture the supremacy. This struggle at last culminated in the split at Gaya. But the present schism in the Congress ranks bases itself upon the conflict between the upper-middle class rationalists and the lower-middle class revivalists. The third element, that is, the toiling masses, which is destined to decide ultimately the fate of the nation, is still practically left out of the struggle. Nevertheless, the fundamental issue involved in the transition through which the Congress is passing is not the conflict between the upper and lower strata of the middle class. Neither of these two elements is able or willing to rise up to that height of revolutionary outlook which is required to drag the Congress out of the miserable rut into which it has sunk under the leadership of the lower-middle class spiritualists, and to save it from the sure reversion to the programme of constitutional democracy, which will follow the triumph of upper-middle class nationalism. The problem we are called upon to solve was tersely enunciated by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, when he questioned the ability of the middle classes to make non-cooperation effective, and boldly declared that the masses wanted swaraj more than the bourgeoisie. In short, the historic question put to the revolutionary nationalists today is : *Is purely bourgeois politics capable of developing our struggle for liberation?* The

experience of the last two years has amply proved that the answer can be safely given in the negative. Hence it follows that the social basis of the movement must be radically changed. In other words, the change in the non-cooperation programme must transcend the limits of substituting lower-middle class confusion by upper-middle class radicalism. The change should be so formulated as actively to involve into the movement those social forces that are bound to be uncompromisingly revolutionary, namely, the workers and peasants—those who have nothing to lose, but a world to gain. The future belongs to this element. The time has come for the organisation of these objectively revolutionary elements in a political party of its own, which will be the great people's party of India. The organisation of this party, the future leader of the struggle for national independence, is the task of those who stand for a change, but for a forward-looking change in the Congress programme.

### **The Propertied Classes are The Basis of the Present Order**

You have undertaken this historic mission of liberating our movement from the fetters of middle-class reaction, compromise, hesitation and timidity, in order to transplant it onto the healthy soil of revolutionary mass action. But you fail to accomplish this mission if the objective forces asserting themselves on the social background of our movement are not taken into proper and proportionate consideration. There is room for only three parties in the Congress. Two are already in the field. You have to be either the third, that is, the political expression of the working masses, or nothing. ~~Your~~ reluctance to recognise the existence of class conflict and to admit the inevitability of class struggle betray the haziness of your social outlook. It behoves a party of those social elements that benefit by class domination to denounce class struggle as dangerous to society, and piously to preach class collaboration, but those inspired by the revolutionary ideal of socio-economic liberation for all cannot subscribe

to this ruling-class philosophy without betraying their ideal. Has not Deshbandhu Das himself declared against substituting the foreign bureaucracy by its native prototype? If he will look a bit deeper into things he will discover who stands behind the bureaucratic governments. It is the propertied classes, owning all the means of production and distribution and consequently exploiting the expropriated majority. Therefore by declaring war upon the present governmental system, Mr Das admits the necessity of destroying the authority of the class that stands behind it; as otherwise the character of the modern bourgeois state cannot be changed, and Mr Das's socio-political ideal will never come out of the realm of utopia. We are not manufacturing the spectre of class war. It is raging in the civilised society based on private property. We communists stand for the abolition of classes and consequently of class struggle; but classes cannot disappear unless private property is abolished. And can any reasonable person believe that the class benefiting by the system of private property will ever consent to its abolition without struggle, however sanguinary it may be? No amount of humanitarian sermons will induce its members to forgo the smallest part of the profits and privileges that accrue from ownership. Hence, to organise the expropriated and exploited workers and peasants, but not on the principles of class interests and class struggle, is to deceive them; to preach to the victims of class tyranny virtuous doctrines of the "ideal of human unity", "class collaboration for the common benefit of the community" etc. etc. only perpetuates class domination.

We dwell somewhat at length on the question of classes and class struggle, not that we give precedence to the civil war over the national war, but because your party entertains a very subjective and prejudiced attitude on the matter. This constitutes a serious weakness for the young party, which thus fails to strike an anchor in the depths of the society. If you propose to lead a certain class of our society in the national war, you cannot do so without defining clearly how

the interests of the particular class will be advanced by the successful prosecution of the national war. The non-cooperation movement so far failed to do so; hence its failure to secure permanently the active support of the masses. Your party should not commit the same mistake if it is to carry the struggle further on.

### **The Issue of Council Entry is a Secondary One**

Now, lamentable aversion to class conflict led the pioneers of your party somewhat astray. Lack of realistic vision prevented you from grasping the true significance of the breach in the Congress ranks. Consequently, you greatly prejudiced your otherwise strong position by an equivocal attitude towards the radicals of the extreme right. It is deplorable that you forced the issue at Gaya on the secondary question of council entry. You surely do not believe that the future of our movement depends on whether we contest the coming elections or not ! Your attitude towards the question of council entry has its tactical value, but this tactical value also becomes problematical, if there does not exist a revolutionary party which will send its members to the polls with a concerted programme, and will back their actions in the councils by means of mass action outside. Then, the tactics of "wrecking the councils" presupposes the chances of returning a majority, which are not very bright. So long as there does not exist a well organised party, it is premature for revolutionaries to make the question of council entry the point of issue. None but the party with a revolutionary outlook and a large following among the masses can carry on successfully the tactics of "wrecking and obstruction". Otherwise the consequence is likely to be reprehensible, namely, the "responsive co-operation" of the Mahratta party, which is hardly distinguishable from the liberals. The difference between "responsive co-operators" and the liberals is as fictitious as that between the Tories and Liberals in the British Parliament concerning colonial affairs. But do we need the luxury of such party politics when the playground is but an empty show?



Your leaders failed to dissociate themselves from the "pro-change" elements of the rightwing because they did not recognise the significance of the diversity of social interests behind the two wings of the "pro-change" party. Had your programme not revolved on the pivot of council entry, its other clauses would have attracted all the available revolutionary elements within and without the Congress, and the Congress today would have stood clear of the stifling atmosphere of lower-middle class reaction and inanity. Given a clear understanding of the cross-currents of the social forces actuating our movement, you are the vanguard of the revolutionary mass party, which is the crying need of the day, and which alone will save the Congress from the disgraceful fate of sinking into the neo-liberalism of the Mahratta politicians on the one hand, and on the other, from equally disgraceful fate of surrendering itself to the imbecile leadership of ultra-Gandhism which unconsciously plays the role of the handmaid of social reaction.

You should have made your position at Gaya unequivocal. You should have repudiated openly any possible relation based upon identity of interests with those advocates of "change" who in the name of rationalism and practical politics would turn the Congress into a respectable party of the upper middle class in tussle with the big bourgeoisie. Then the reactionary religious nationalists would not have had the chance of rallying a large section of the sentimentally revolutionary element by artfully harping on the tune of "the masses". But the shallowness of their affection for the masses was exposed by their failure to respond to the revolutionary note struck by Mr Das in his statement: "We do not want a bourgeois republic." And they become the standard-bearers of rank reaction when, through the mouth of Rajagopalacharya, on the authority of the Mahatma, they denounce "any scheme to make political use of the workers". What a preposterous theory ! But everyone pretending to advocate the cause of the masses, while blinking at the ugly feature of class interests, eventually lands in this reprehensible position.

### **The True Nature of The Split at Gaya**

The net result at Gaya, however, was that in the din of the clash between upper-and middle class interests, the revolutionary voice of the workers and peasants raised through the declassified Chittaranjan was drowned. Unfortunately the fight did not take place on the issue of *bourgeois politics* versus *mass politics* but of upper-middle class confusion as well as rowdyism. Apparently the latter has won, but it is the contrary as a matter of fact. The upper-middle class rationalists of the Mahratta school will pursue their own line of action, in spite of the Congress decision, and the latter will be left without any intellectual leadership on the one hand, and bereft of revolutionary dynamics on the other. Meanwhile, no clear avenue has been cut for the only truly revolutionary forces to assert themselves upon the movement. If the next twelve months are allowed to pass by without seeing the growth of a leftwing party with a clear consciousness of its own social nature, we can be sure that in its next annual session, the Congress will be hardly distinguishable from the Liberal League or the Home Rule show of Mrs Besant.

The voice that spoke through Deshbandhu Chittaranjan and his associates is presumably embodied in the Congress-Khilafat Swaraj Party, which has been inaugurated by issuing the manifesto, signed by a number of the leaders of the "pro-change" faction. But in reality the Deshbandhu with his revolutionary following again finds himself in the minority, because the majority of the new party, which appears to be formed under his leadership, subscribes much less to the socio-political views of Mr Das than do the die-hards of the "no-change" cult, who remain in the control of the Congress machinery. The result of such a combination can and will be—either that Mr Das will soon have to abandon his original position in favour of the "responsive co-operation" of the Mahratta rationalists, or that he will have to part company with them in order to organise the third party inside the National Congress, the party which will reflect clearly the

uncompromisingly revolutionary elements of our society, and which will infuse vigour into the national struggle by means of revolutionary mass action.

### **The Necessity for a Second Split**

This unequivocal position will be cleared by a second split in the Congress camp. To force this inevitable separation of the revolutionary forces from the embrace of the rightwing, which will bring the Congress back practically under the influence of liberalism, is the task before you. Only by breaking away from the rightwing, which in the name of rationalism has repudiated the tactics of militant non-cooperation, your party will stand out as the vanguard of the national army, the leader of the national struggle, and in this role will liberate the Congress from the control of the religious die-hards, by attracting to its ranks all the sincere elements left in the folds of the "no-change" party.

3 February 1923.

*(One Year of Non-cooperation, by  
M. N. Roy & Evelyn Roy, Chapter xiii)*

## **Resolution on the Orient Question\***

**Adopted on March 4, 1922,  
by the Executive Committee  
of Communist International**

### **Resolution**

1. Owing to the great importance of the national revolutionary movements which are developing more and in the colonial countries of the Near East and neutral Asia and especially in Egypt and in India the Plenum of the Executive proposes to the parties of those countries which are in connection with the aforementioned regions to organize a systematic campaign for the liberation of the colonies in the press, in Parliament and among the masses. The Communist Party of England is especially requested to launch a well-organized and continued action with a view of supporting the revolutionary movement in India and Egypt.

2. The three parties which are connected with North Africa, Asia Minor and India, the Communist Parties of France, Italy and England should follow the example set by the French party and establish special colonial commissions attached to their Executive Committees in order systematically to collect informations on colonial matters, establish connections with the revolutionary organizations in the colonial countries and realize close contact with them. The Balkan Communist Federation undertakes to deal especially with the organizations of the Communist movement in Turkey.

3. The Executive Committee proposes to all parties that they utilize all possibilities for the publication of Communist literature in the languages of the colonies and thus create close connection

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\* Taken from: INPRECORR No. 29 of 1922

## Message sent to the All India Trade Union Congress, Lahore, by the Third International in 1922

*The Third International sent a greetings by Telegram dated 4.12.1922 to the All India Trade Union Congress having its session at Lahore in 1922. The British Commercial Mission at Moscow transmitted a copy of this message of greetings to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston for information of the Foreign Department of the British Government. Subsequently, the Secretary of the Judicial and Public Department of the British Government sent a copy of this message to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, for their information. These two letters are printed here after the message of greetings sent by the Third International to AITUC. These facts reveal how sensitive the British Government was in those days about the spread of Communist influence in India.*

### Message

“Comrades, The proletariat of the West greets you with the greatest enthusiasm in the stubborn fight which you have been waging for several years to secure the amelioration of the economic conditions of the working class of India. The Fourth Congress of the Communist International sends you warm greetings.

Comrades, While expressing our sympathy and promising you our fullest support in winning your cause, we should like to remind you that your tasks are great and that you must not narrow them down. The working class of India is not only

fighting for honourable pay for honourable work; the economic liberation of the workers and peasants of India depends on the nation's political liberty. No amelioration can be obtained in the framework of imperialist exploitation. Therefore your duty is to play an important role in the fight for national liberation. Prepare yourselves to fulfil this historic role. The vanguard of the proletariat of fifty-two countries represented at this Congress is with you. Beware of the false friendship and treacherous counsels of leaders of compromise''

Letters of the British Government regarding this message of greetings of the Third International :

INDIA OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON, S.W.1.

14th December, 1922.

Confidential

J. & P. (S) 6599.

Manifesto of the III International  
to the All-India Trades Union Congress.

Despatch from Moscow dated  
4.12.22 and enclosure

Dear Sir,

I forward, for information, copy of the papers noted in the margin, on the subject of the above.

I am,

Yours faithfully,  
for Secretary  
Judicial and Public Department.

The Secretary to the  
Government of India,  
Home Department.

No. 949.  
(M.2b14)

British Commercial Mission,  
Moscow

December 4, 1922.

My Lord Marquess,

I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a manifesto addressed by the Fourth Congress of the Third International to the All-India Congress of Trades Unions at Lahore.

I have the honour to be  
With the highest respect,

My Lord Marquess,

Your Lordship's most obedient,  
humble servant,

The Right Honourable,

The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, P.C.K.O. etc. etc. etc.

## Message of the Communist International on the Chauri-Chaura Sentence in 1923

*History of Chauri-Chaura incident : "On the 5th February (1922), when a Congress procession was taking place at Chauri-Chaura, near Gorakhpur, U.P., 21 constables and a Sub-Inspector were rushed by the mob into a Police Station, and the station and the men in it were set fire to. They all perished in the flames."—said Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in his 'The History of the Indian National Congress', Vol. I, page 235, of 1946 publication.*

*Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad had given a more objective report on Chauri-Chaura Incident in his memoir : 'Myself and the Communist Party of India' where he stated : "In February 1922, there had been a small uprising of peasants in Chauri-Chaura in the district of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. The peasants had attacked and set fire to an outpost of the oppressive police force. There had been altogether twenty-one policemen there, and all of them were burnt to death. The case was tried by Judge Holme in the Sessions Court. It is not known how the actual culprits were found out from among a huge number of persons or how the Judge took evidence against them. It was an entirely absurd affair. But Mr. Holme's heart was filled with malice and vindictiveness. He pronounced death sentence in the same case and simultaneously on 172 persons. That day even Englishmen residing in India hid their heads from shame. The Allahabad High Court called for the papers at once and upheld the sentence in respect of about ten or twelve persons." (page 355, 1970 edition)*



*Immediately after Chauri-Chaura incident Gandhiji suspended the Congress movement on the ground that principles of non-violence were violated by the Chauri-Chaura incident.*

*The Manifesto of the Communist International, reproduced here, was in protest against the death sentence given to 172 Indians which they termed as a 'legal murder'.*

## **Manifesto**

Imperialist justice has condemned 172 men to death in India. One year ago, 228 men were arrested on the charge of having participated in a riot which resulted in the burning down of the police station at Chauri-Chaura and the killing of 22 policemen. *One hundred and seventy-two* men are to be executed in revenge for the death of 22 policemen who fell while defending "law and order". The atrocity of this legal murder is unparalleled, even in the bloody history of British rule in India. 172 Indian peasants are going to be hanged, while the curtain is hardly down upon the bloody drama of the Mophla Massacre, and while brutal repression has not yet succeeded in quelling the rebellion of the Sikh peasants. The revolt of the colonial masses has attained such dangerous proportions, that Imperialism has inaugurated veritable reign of terror to maintain its position.

Since 1919, India has been a scene of mass murder and brutal repression. Beginning with Amritsar, British Imperialism has gone on making free use of tanks, bombing-planes, machine-guns and bayonets in order to drown the rebellious people in rivers of blood. The jails of the country contain more than 30,000 men and women arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, for taking part in the nationalist movement. 6,689 poor peasants of Malabar (Mophlas) are undergoing penal servitude. Five of them have been hanged and 70 suffocated to death, 5,000 Sikh peasants of the Punjab are lying in jail, beaten and maltreated. To add to this inglorious record, another 172 men are to be sent to the gallows.

The great majority of these condemned men belong to the poor peasantry, which was driven to revolt under the unbearable burden of war taxation and unprecedently high prices. The revolt was directed simultaneously against the native landlords and foreign government, both of which jointly suck the blood of the peasantry. The revolt was expressed in the form of huge mass demonstrations, under nationalist slogans and direction. These demonstrations were peaceful, since the leaders of the nationalist movement are petty bourgeois pacifists believing in the cult of non-violence. But Imperialism would not suffer even a peaceful demonstration of the unarmed masses. A procession of about 3,000 people was fired upon from the police station of Chauri Chaura, by which it was passing towards the near-by market in order to picket the sale of foreign cloth. This act of provocation infuriated the peaceful demonstrators, who attacked the police station, all the inmates of which were killed in the affray. The casualty on the side of the insurgents was never disclosed; but the result of firing volleys upon a crowd of 3,000 can be easily imagined. The fury quickly spread in the surrounding districts and developed into a dangerous agrarian uprising, which was suppressed by military forces rushed to the spot. The number of those perishing at the merciless hand of "law and order" is not known. Upon the suppression of the revolt, a considerable number of men were arrested, 228 of whom were sent up for trial under the charge of "murder and arson". The trial has ended by condemning 172 of the accused to death.

The international proletariat, engaged in a bitter struggle with Capitalism in every part of the world, must not let this imperialist butchery go unchallenged.

The revolt of the toiling masses in the colonial countries is a powerful factor in the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of bourgeois dictatorship and the inauguration of a new order of society. Imperialism attempts to drown this revolt of the colonial masses in rivers of blood. The proletariat of the imperialist countries cannot remain indifferent.

Energetic action must be taken on behalf of our Indian comrades, fighting bloody battles against the imperialist terror.

*Working men and working women!* Hold protest meetings and demonstrations, condemning this act of imperialist butchery and demanding the release of the condemned men. Demand of the 2nd International and the Amsterdam Federation that they call upon their mainstay, the British Labour Party, to save the lives of 172 Indian peasants, whose only crime was that they were hungry, and they were so unbearably hungry because they had been forced to contribute too much for the prosecution of the "war for democracy", Demand of the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  International that its backbone, the Independent Labour Party, be asked to rise up to its noble professions of pacifism.

*Proletariat of Great Britain!* It is your duty to take the lead in this case. Call upon the Labour Party to take Parliamentary action against this bloody deed of British Imperialism. If the reformist leaders will not be moved to action even by such a flagrant violation of every moral and legal code which they hold up as a standard for others, you must repudiate their leadership and resort to direct action in order to uphold the right of the subject peoples to revolt, and to demonstrate the world-wide solidarity of the toiling masses in their struggle against Capitalism. The wild career of Imperialism gone mad can only be checked under the threat of direct action of the home proletariat.

*Down with Imperialism!*  
*Victory to the Workers and Peasants of India!*  
*Long live the International Solidarity*  
*of the Working Class!*

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.  
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE RED INTERNATIONAL OF LABOUR UNIONS.

## Kanpur Communist Conspiracy case, 1924\*

### Earlier Events

I had sent Shaukat Usmani away to Aligarh. I think I did the right thing. It was the end of February, 1923. At that time, I have already said, I had no lodging of my own. Therefore, along with Abdul Halim, who also was in the same plight, I slept every night in the living-room of my pupil's house at 3 Gumghar Lane. Early one morning, when I had just woke up, I saw Muhammad Ismail, a sub-inspector in the Special Branch of the Calcutta Police, going along the lane. I had known him even before he joined the police. Although he had covered his head with a shawl, I knew him by the sight of his forehead. I called him by his name and asked him why he was there so early in the morning. He said that his maid-servant had run away and he had heard that she had started working in some household at Chandney. In fact, he had come to select points for posting watchers.

A large number of watchers (I cannot remember clearly their exact number today), in batches of four or six together, started following me. Just a few days later, I found also a sub-inspector accompanying these watchers. I was being watched openly, a thing which I had not heard of happening in the case of anyone else. Later, I heard a report that Mr Kyd, the Deputy Commissioner of the Special Branch of the Calcutta Police, had ordered Muzaffar Ahmad to be watched openly. It was not possible for me to go anywhere without this crowd

\* Excerpts from Muzaffar Ahmad's Memoirs: "Myself and the Communist Party of India", pages 327-406

after me. I thought of consulting Bhupendra kumar Datta and sent a courier to him. He sent the message that he would be waiting on the first floor of the office of '*The Servant*', an English daily, long before the appointed time. I should go there along with the watchers, go up straight to the first floor and meet him, leaving the watchers behind on the road. I saw Bhupendrakumar Datta according to the instruction given. He asked me to stay away for some time in a village. Just then it was not possible for me to go away to village. Moreover, I was absolutely penniless. The draft for £ 50 received through Bhupati Majumdar had not yet been cashed. At this time Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya also sent me word that he could arrange to fix me at some village near Munshigunge (Dacca).

Then there was another unexpected development. I was passing my days with this pack of watchers at my heels. One afternoon, I went out for a walk in the open air and was sitting on the lawn of Wellington Square. The watchers also sat down on the lawn, some distance away from me. I was seized with a sudden whim. Central Calcutta was a maze of lanes and alleys. I thought of testing once whether it was possible to give the watchers the slip. I had made myself familiar with the lanes and alleys long ago. I got up and started walking. After some time, I increased my pace as much as possible. The watchers were not familiar with the lanes and alleys in this part of the city, and nearly all of them fell behind. When I was crossing Mirzapur Street (now Suraya Sen Street), I looked back and found that the Brahmin from Faridpur with a holy tuft of hair on his head was still following me.

In our Bengal, no one observes the custom of keeping a holy tuft on his head. I got very annoyed with him and thought of teaching him a lesson by making a bath absolutely necessary for him that night. I led him through the narrow passages in the Muslim slums of Baithakkhana, where people dispose of even the refuse water after washing their utensils. Slippers were not yet in vogue in Bengal in those days ; people wore shoes ; otherwise, the man could not have avoided wetting his feet in the slops. Tired out, I came to College Square and

sat there for a long time. Then I got up and was walking very slowly inside the park. It was almost time to close the gates when suddenly there appeared a mad dog, one of those small, long-haired dogs. At first, the dog went for the watcher. But he kicked up such a row that the dog jumped, bit me below the knee, and hung by its teeth which had got stuck into my cloth. I shook off the dog violently, and then it bit a few other persons. All this happened even in less than a minute's time. I went to a shop in Mirzapur Street and was examining the wound under the light when a gentleman advised me to go at once to the emergency ward of the Medical College. I found there on duty a senior student of my acquaintance. He washed the wound, burnt the spot with nitric acid and took down my name, address, etc. In those days the Pasteur Institute was in the hills of Shillong; there was no cold storage or refrigerator in Calcutta. So it was unavoidable for me to go to Shillong. All the same, I saw Dr. Tejendranath Roy and requested him to agree for my treatment in Calcutta and save me from going to Shillong. He explained to me that the things needed for treatment were not available here. He read out to me from a book that hydrophobia could occur even eighteen years after the dog bite. I was compelled to go to Shillong.

### **Why I Did Not Want to Go to Shillong**

There is a brief history behind my reluctance to go to Shillong for anti-rabic treatment. My correspondence with M. N. Roy began from May, 1922. Almost from the very beginning he had been asking me to go to Europe. He wrote that there were many things to discuss. My impression was that through these discussions with me he wanted to teach me a lot of things and to learn from me also a good deal about the Indian situation. I also wanted to go abroad. Unlike Dange, I didn't have any objection to going to Europe in search of Communism. But although Roy was certainly inviting me to Europe, he was not sending me any passage money. As I had become exposed to the police, there was no hope of my getting a passport. If I was to go, I had to go by working on a ship.

The police were reading most of M. N. Roy's letters to me ; so they would be keeping watch in this direction also. As it was more likely for people like me to go as a saloon-worker, the police would watch this department most and, next to it, the deck. But the police, it seemed to me, would not expect a frail man like me becoming a coal stoker ; so I explored this possibility. Jafar Ali Sahib was the elder brother of Aftab Ali. I went and told him everything. Aftab was then in America. Jafar Ali Sahib promised to help me in every way. He had a shop dealing in sailors' uniforms in Kalibabu's market at Kidderpore. He had transactions with the engine department. He said that he would fix me up with a serang who would not put me to any work at all. There was one difficulty. Owing to the lack of physical cleanliness, I had got scabies on some parts of my body. Persons with scabies are not allowed on ships. So I had to cure myself of scabies, and this took a long time. Then, when I was once again talking with Jafar Ali Sahib about going to Europe, I was bitten by the dog. Much time was lost by going to Shillong. After returning from Shillong, I read in the early morning edition of a newspaper that a 'Bolshevik agent' had been arrested in Kanpur. The 'Bolshevik agent' was Shaukat Usmani. The day was May 10, 1923 - which meant that Shaukat Usmani had been arrested on May 9, 1923, I realized at once that it was my turn now. It was not possible for me to stay away anywhere and from there try to go abroad. Qutbuddin Sahib had gone with his family to a village named Saonta near Kushtiya. The draft, referred to earlier, still lay uncashed. I had kept the draft with Qutbuddin Sahib and he had put it in a place from where it was not possible for me to bring it. This means that the person in whose custody he had kept the draft would not hand it over to me. Fortunately, I found by chance someone through whom I sent a message to Qutubuddin. I wrote to him, "The police would be searching your place any day. Come immediately on receipt of my letter." He came on the night of May 16, 1923. I was then living at 5, Maulavi lane, in one of his houses. After hearing everything, he said, "It's better not to wait till the draft is

cashed. I shall give you some money tomorrow. Slip away to some place for the time being." It was early morning, and we were still sleeping when we were awakened by the sound of boots. I saw Mr Kyd standing near my head. Sub-Inspector Bazle Murshedi was saying, "Sir, he is Muzaffar Ahmad."

13 Elysium Row and 14 Elysium Row (now called Lord Sinha Road) are two adjacent buildings. Premises No. 13 belongs to the Intelligence Branch of the Bengal Police and Premises No. 14 to the Intelligence Branch of the Calcutta Police. There is an intervening wall, but there is also a common door leading from one building to the other.

I was taken to the outhouse of the building of the Special Branch. Among men of these two buildings there is a practice that whenever any new person is arrested and brought here, officers of all ranks and watchers from both the buildings come and have a look once at him. Everyone had a look at me too: that is, all those who had never seen me before now saw me. Before leaving, Nalini Majumdar, then an inspector in the Special Branch, said to me, "Well, we shall meet in Peshawar." The other officers also said the same thing. The assistant sub-inspectors of the Special Branch and the watchers began to protest loudly, "It's we who went through the trouble of standing and keeping watch in the sun and now the I. B. people want to pocket the travelling and other allowances." This was an old quarrel between the S. B. and the I. B. On missions anywhere outside Calcutta it was the I. B. people who were sent. I was convinced that whatever might be the reason, I was going to Peshawar. The officers were very happy at the prospect of drawing fat allowances.

In the evening Kyd said to me, "You are arrested under Sec. 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code." In those days the Police Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner of Calcutta had the powers of a magistrate. They could arrest anybody and keep him in police lock-up at Lalbazar. Neither myself nor my friends of those days knew what Sec. 54 was. On the ninth day of my arrest, my friends informed Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq. He came to Elysium Row immediately, and demanded bail



for me, saying that if bail was not granted forthwith, he would move the High Court the next day.

Just after Mr Fazlul Haq had left the office of the Special Branch Mr Kyd ordered me to be released on a bail of Rs.500/-. Under Sec. 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the accused person under arrest must be granted bail as soon as asked for. After I came out, people of all classes started saying that there was no case against me ; if there had been really any case pending against me, the police would never have released me on a bail of Rs. 500/-. I was befooled by what everybody was saying. I got misled about the whole thing. I could have easily gone away, if I wanted. I could have even tried to go to Europe. I had Rs. 750/- on hand after cashing the draft. I thought only of the possibility of a case being started against but not that of detention without trial under Regulation III of 1818. None of my friends warned me of it. How could I know what was going on in the highest circles of the Government?

During the period I was in the lock-up after my arrest, I was taken almost every day to Elysium Row and showered with questions. In order to find out what and how much the police knew, I said nothing for a few days. Then one day a bundle of letters was opened and shown to me. I found there many photo copies of letters exchanged between M. N. Roy and me. Then I thought of changing my tactics. I said that I wrote to M. N. Roy and also followed the Communist International and that I was acquainted with Nalini Gupta. I said further that Nalini was not a Communist but had leaning towards the terrorist revolutionaries. (After very thorough investigations many years later, I found out that Nalini was not a member of either Anushilan or Jugantar ; he was a daring vagabond). The copy of the statement I made can now be had from the National Archives of India. I did not know either personally or by their antecedents any of the Communists, starting from those in the North-West Frontier Province of those who were working in different parts of India, including the accused in the Moscow Conspiracy Case. I knew Shaukat

*Usmani only. He was arrested before me. He also made a statement. But I have neither read his statement nor taken a copy of it. Of the first three state prisoners, I was arrested last.*

In Bengal I had connections with Bhupendrakumar Datta and Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya. I did not make any statement or say even a word about them to the police.

The police have mixed up slightly my statement with that of Abdul Hafiz. The man whom Nalini met in Amherst Street was Abdul Hafiz, not me.

In the eyes of the Home Government we were 'Bolsheviks'. In the opinion of the Secretary of the State for India none of us were fit to remain outside jail. Accordingly, he wanted to have us either convicted and thrown into prison or detained as prisoners under Regulation III of 1818. We did not have even the slightest knowledge of all these things at that time. Now that old Government records are available, I am writing fluently about them. The Secretary of State got impatient to some extent because of his attitude that Bolshevism, if it entered India, will wreck the British Empire. But there was an attitude of hesitation on the part of the Government of India, for the situation did not exactly call for any summary measure.

A lot of consultations took place also before the Moscow Conspiracy Case was launched in Peshawar. Some were of the view that the accused had just entered India from abroad and, therefore, no case could lie against them. Malcolm Hailey, Home Member in the Governor-General's Executive Council, said that the mere fact of having studied in a university in Moscow could not constitute an offence. He suggested that the accused be detained under Regulation III of 1818. There were some who said that since Shaukat Usmani was going about all over India, he should be arrested and included in the Moscow Conspiracy Case in order to strengthen it. The Government of the Frontier Province had out of zeal issued also a warrant against Shaukat Usmani with the object of instituting a case against him under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code, and it was on the strength of this warrant that

Shaukat Usmani was sent up to Peshawar after his arrest in Kanpur. Sir John Maffey, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, said that he wanted the accused to be detained under Regulation III of 1818, but they could be prosecuted also. Col. Kaye said that if prosecution was possible they should be prosecuted, but the trial must be held in Peshawar. Kaye had an instant brain-wave. It struck him that since the Judicial Commissioner of Peshawar was still the same officer that had tried the case against Muhammad Akbar Khan, he could not go back upon his previous judgment.

But when Shaukat Usmani was arrested and sent up to Peshawar, the Moscow Conspiracy Case had proceeded quite far. It was not possible to include any accused person in the middle of a trial without starting the case all over again. Besides, Sir John Maffey, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, wrote to the Government of India :

"3. There is no conspiracy case pending in this province, though, owing to an inaccurate message issued to the press from Cawnpore, the Criminal Investigation Department of the United Provinces and Bengal appear to have acted on the assumption that there is. The United Provinces' Criminal Investigation Department have informed the Intelligence Branch, Peshawar, that the Government of the United Provinces are not prepared to institute a case against Usmani in those provinces, while the Bengal Criminal Investigation Department have arrested an associate of Usmani named Muzaffar Ahmad, and have suggested that he should be included in the case with the former in Peshawar.

"4. While the trial of Usmani in Peshawar might possibly be argued to be legal, if evidence of his activities outside India were strong (which it is not), neither he nor Muzaffar Ahmad, who had never apparently left India, can be tried in Peshawar for their actions in furtherance of the revolutionary conspiracy committed in India; for these actions though they are connected with individuals and movements in the Punjab, United Provinces, Bengal and possibly, other provinces. do not, so

far as the available evidence shows, definitely link up with a single individual or act in the North-West Frontier Province." (No. 487-P.C.N. dated the 29th May, 1923.)

Although the Bengal C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) had wanted to include me with Shaukat Usmani in the case against him in Peshawar in order to pass the buck to others and at the same time to pocket fat allowances, but after John Maffey's letter their hopes were dashed to the ground. So the case against Usmani and, consequently, against me also in Peshawar did not materialise. But we had caught a Tartar. The Government of India had recourse to Regulation III of 1818.

### ORDER IN COUNCIL.

#### ACTION TO BE TAKEN AGAINST

*1. Shaukat Usmani. 2. Ghulam Hussain. 3. Muzaffar Ahmad, under Regulation III and their cases then to be more fully examined with a view to prosecution under the ordinary law.*

*The cases against (4) Dange and (5) Singaravelu should be examined with a view to prosecution. (Reading 8. 6. 23.)*

Regulation III of 1818 was really the Bengal State Prisoners Act of 1818 ; hence, prisoners under this regulation were also called 'state prisoners.'

It was imperative to name the place of detention in the warrants issued against state prisoners over the signature of the Home Secretary to the Government of India.

On June 12, 1923, the Government of India sent the following telegram to the Government of Burma in pursuance of their 'clear the line' telegram, dated the 12th June, 1923 :

Telegram P., No. 1309 dated Simla, the 12th June, 1923.

From the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

To the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, Mymyo.

Please refer to my clear the line telegram no. 1309-D, dated 9th instant. There are obvious reasons including the conditions of incarceration prescribed by the regulation, that place of confinement of these men should be as far as possible removed

from the scene of their recent activities and connections. If so, arrangements for their transfer will be made in due course.

The Government of India could not make up their mind as to what to do with us. Now they wanted to include Shaukat Usmani and me in the Moscow Conspiracy Case, only to be frustrated owing to the objection of the Chief Commissioner of the Frontier Province ; now order was issued under Regulation III of 1818 for detention without trial of Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani and Ghulam Hussian. It was decided to banish us to Burma. Although Burma was then a province of India, to us it was virtually a foreign country beyond the seas. The Government of Burma were asked to keep us as far removed as possible from the scene of our activities and connections. There was no place of activities or connections of ours within Burma. The language of the telegram shows that there was no instruction to keep us separate from one another. The telegram mentions 'place', not 'places.'

On June 20, 1923, the Government of Burma informed the Government of India (Telegram P., No. 529-C, dated the 20th June, 1923) that they had decided to incarcerate Ghulam Hussian in the Thayetmoy Jail, Shaukat Usmani in the Myingyan Jail, and Muzaffar Ahmad in the Mandalay Jail and they wanted to know the probable date of their arrival in Rangoon.

We, of course, knew nothing about all these developments behind the scene. Even though I am in my eighties, I cannot help feeling a little excited in reading about me in old documents. I am also feeling very happy to think that Mandalay Jail was fixed as my place of confinement. I have never been to Burma in my life, but from the sound of their names—I do not know why — it seems as if Thayetmyo and Myingyan were bad places.

One thing strikes me as very strange. According to the order of the Governor-General-in-Council we were detained temporarily as state prisoners pending detailed examination of our cases with a view to prosecution. This being the position, why did the Government try to send us away to Burma. However, we were not sent ultimately to Burma.

Only three of us were held as state prisoners, but Maylapuram Singaravelu Chettiar, Sripad Amrit Dange, etc., were left out. The Government were seriously thinking of prosecuting us. The telegrams that were exchanged between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India, if printed together, would make a voluminous book.

### **Setting The Stage for The Conspiracy Case**

The Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India had been making preparations for the case. The Central Intelligence Bureau was by then renamed as the Intelligence Bureau. Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Kaye was its Director. Mr Kaye was an officer of neither the Indian Police Service nor the Indian Civil Service but of the Indian Army. Under his supervision, not only documents were being collected but the list of persons to be accused in the case was being prepared as well.

At first, a list of one hundred and fifty-five persons was prepared, which included the names of even those at whose addresses our literature, letters, etc., were sent. This, I think, was an absurd list. Finally, the Intelligence Bureau prepared a list of thirteen persons furnished with full details about them and forwarded it to their counsels for consideration. These thirteen were :

- (1) Manabendranath Roy
- (2) Muzaffar Ahmad
- (3) Shaukat Usmani
- (4) Ghulam Hussain
- (5) Shripad Amrit Dange
- (6) Maylapuram Singaravelu Chettiar
- (7) Ramcharanlal Sharma
- (8) Nalini Gupta (Nalinibhusan Dasgupta)
- (9) Shamsuddin Hassan
- (10) M. P. T. Velayudhan
- (11) Manilal Doctor (Shah) .
- (12) Sampurnananda
- (13) Satyabhakta

In the records of the Kanpur Conspiracy Case, Dnage's name appears everywhere as Shripat Amrit Dange, never as Shripad Amrit Dange.

M. P. T. Velayudhan was a fellow-worker of Singaravelu Chettiar's. When, after his expulsion from the Communist Party of India and the Communist International, Abani Mukherjee wrote letters to Communists in different part in India, many did not acknowledge receipt, but Velayudhan did. He promised to help Abani Mukherjee. At the time of returning to Europe, Abani Mukherjee left in Velayudhan's custody both these documents : the credential given to him by Dr. Bhupendranath Datta and Maulavi Barkatullah and the mandate for admission to the Third Congress of the Communist International. It was settled that Velayudhan would send back both the documents after Abani's return to Europe. The documents possibly were returned to him. But in the process Velayudhan did not forget to line his purse a little. He allowed the Police Intelligence Branch to make photo-copies of both the documents. One of them is reproduced here. This photo-copy was obtained from the National Archives of India.

Sampurnananda was Headmaster in Dungar College in Bikaner when Shaukat Usmani was a student there. He is the same person as the famous Dr Sampurnananda of Banaras who became a Chief Minister and a Governor later.

### **I Shall Write about Manilal Doctor Elsewhere**

Satyabhakta was a native of Bharatpur State. His real name was Chikanlal (Chakanlal). 'chikan' being the 'chikan' of 'Chikan Kala' (the beautiful black hue)\* of the Vaishnavs of Bengal. At the beginning of his political career, Satyabhakta was in Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram. I think that he became 'Satyabhakta' there. Probably, during the Non-co-operation movement, it was he who first conceived the idea of printing photos of leaders and selling them. He started this business in Allahabad. He must have sold lakhs of photos of Gandhi

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\* The Vaishnava deity Krishna is called Chikan Kala.

and the two Ali brothers. Who knows how many thousands of copies he sold of photos of other leaders also. On the whole, *Satyabhakta did good business out of this. After this, we find him publishing a Hindi paper named Pranvir from Nagpur. I have found the paper being referred as Pranvina in some places. When Dange brought out his Socialist, Satyabhakta became acquainted with him through correspondence.*

This was a remarkable combination. Later, both were found advocating Indian Communism, not International Communism.

The counsels, after going through the documents, dropped from the list of the accused five names : (1) Shamsuddin Hassan, (2) M. P. T. Valayudhan, (3) Manilal Doctor, (4) Sampurnananda and (5) Satyabhakta. Finally, on February 27, 1923, the Governor-General of India in Council granted sanction to prosecute the following eight persons under Sec 121-A of the Indian Penal Code :

- (1) Manabendranath Roy
- (2) Mowla Baksh *alias* Shaukat Usmani
- (3) Muzaffar Ahmad
- (4) Ghulam Hussain
- (5) Nalinibhusan Dasgupta
- (6) Ramcharanlal Sharma
- (7) Shripat Amrit Dange
- (8) Maylapur Singaravelu Chettiar

The Governor-General in Council directed Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Kaye, Director of the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India, to institute cases against the afore-named persons under Sec. 196 of the Criminal Procedure Code of 1898 in the Kanpur District Magistrate's Court.

If the papers of a political case were filed before an English Judge, it ended as a rule in the conviction of the accused, there were rare exceptions. When Mr Ross Alston took charge of—as barrister accepted the brief for—the Kanpur Conspiracy Case, he asked the higher officers of the Government of India



to instruct the Government of the United Provinces to appoint an English Magistrate to hold the inquiry into the case.

The Home Department, however, had also to overcome many hurdles before they could obtain the sanction of the Governor-General-in-Council to prosecute eight persons under Sec. 121-A of the Penal Code. They wanted not only to proceed against the accused but to ensure their conviction also. After considerable labour and effort the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India collected an immense number of documents. But who would read all these? The documents, therefore, were summarised, and the briefs were given to the lawyers to read. The first person to be given was Sir Muhammad Shafi, Law Member in the Governor-General's Executive Council. After reading the briefs, Mr Shafi gave his opinion :

"To my mind, it is perfectly obvious that, if, for any reason, the originals of Roy's letters to his various correspondents in India mentioned in the general Statement regarding Roy's previous history and activities as well as in the particular Statements regarding each of the accused persons now under arrest cannot be produced in Court, or grounds of admissibility of Secondary evidence definitely established and Roy's signature proved, it is hopeless to expect conviction of these persons from any Court of law at Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lucknow or Lahore where, of course, naturally the contemplated trial will have to take place." (6. 6. 23 ; 261/1924 & K. W.).

The other members of the Executive Council gave more or less the same opinion as Sir Muhammad Shafi.

In those days the Advocate-General of Bengal was Legal Adviser to the Government of India, and the Government could not file a case like this without his consent. Mr. S. R. Das (Satishranjan Das) was then the Advocate-General of Bengal. The Solicitor to the Government of India came down to Calcutta with some documents and met Mr. S. R. Das, who, after going through them, said that it would not be possible to get the accused convicted on the strength of such evidence. This was

terrible! It was most essential to get the accused convicted. After this, three big officers of the Government of India (Lieutenant-Colonel C. Kaye was one of them) with three portmanteaus, full of documents, met Mr. S. R. Das in Calcutta. Col. Kaye briefed him about the documents. Mr. Das then realized that it was essential for the Government of India to institute the case, and it was agreed that he would draft the petition of complaint. But even on February 11, 1924, it is found the Government of India did not receive the draft from Mr Das.

So, on February 11, 1924, Sir Malcolm Hailey, Home Member of the Government of India, wrote a demi-official letter to Mr S. R. Das, wherein he observed :

" . . . Our consideration of the case has been going on for many months. We are detaining these people under Regulation III ; and it is always desirable that if we have a case against such men it should be brought forward as soon as possible. I would not of course put any man through the course unless I received legal advice that there was sound case against him such as would justify such action ; but as you know in the present case our main object is less to obtain a heavy sentence against the accused than to thoroughly expose the whole conspiracy and to justify our action in using Regulation III."

After this, of course, Mr S. R. Das prepared the draft of the petition of complaint against us. It was this petition which was filed on March 1, 1924, in the court of the District Magistrate of Kanpur, Mr J. W. Clay, by Lieutenant-Colonel C. Kaye as complainant, and the curtain rose on the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case (called the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case by the Government of India) although the real work of inquiry did not start before 17 March, 1924.

### **An Affair of Dange's**

The Bombay Government did not want to include Dange as accused in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case. An extract

from the decision of the Governor-in-Council of Bombay in this connection is quoted below :

From Demi-Official Letter from A. Montgomerie, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Bomaby, Home Department (Special).

To the Hon'ble J. Crerar, C.S.I., C.I.E., Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department (Politics), No. S. D. 1243, dated Poona, the 16th July, 1923.

6. In view of the above considerations, His Excellency the Governor in Council is strongly of opinion that it would be more politic to continue to keep a close watch on Dange and his activities. *He is our most fruitful source of information as to Bolshevist activities* and he is not himself at present particularly prominent Bolshevist. He has had failure in the propaganda efforts, he has been in bad health and has been shouldered out of his leading position by Singaravelu of Madras. If he remains quiescent, he will provide us regular and useful information. If he becomes more dangerous and develops a more practical propaganda of sedition, it will probably be possible to prosecute him under section 121-A, Indian Penal Code. In any case, his Excellency in Council considers that delay for the present would not naturally affect the situation in view particularly of the recent reports of the probable restrictions in future of Bolshevist propaganda in the East as a result of negotiations over the trading regulations between Russia and Great Britain." (My italics.)

The Government of India decided to drop Dange from the case. Even after heaping Dange with abuse (it was one of his tricks), Col Kaye expressed himself in support of leaving Dange out of the case. But the Secretary of State for India in Great Britain was absolutely adamant, and S. A. Dange also had to be included in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case.

It was known beforehand that of the eight persons who were finally accused, it would not be possible to bring up two for trial in the court. They were (i) Manabendranath Roy and (ii) Ramcharanlal Sharma. Roy was in the Continent, and

Ramcharanlal Sharma was a political refugee in Pondicherry in French India. Maylapuram Singaravelu Chettiar had had an attack of typhoid. When he was convalescing, the police came with a warrant to arrest him in connection with the Kanpur case. Eminent doctors, among whom there were Englishmen, certified that the patient should not be moved from bed yet. He was, therefore, granted bail and allowed to stay in his own house at 22 South Beach in Madras.

Nalini Gupta left Moscow for India on December 16, 1922. He reached Karachi via Iran on June 12, 1923. From Karachi he went to Bombay, and from Bombay to Madras, where he stayed for a few days at Singaravelu's house. From Madras he went to Calcutta in the latter half of July, 1923. From Howrah station Nalini went straight to Rameshchandra Dasgupta's mess at 39, Harrison Road and also found him there. Ramesh had been in the same mess at the time of Nalini's departure in 1922. On meeting Ramesh, Nalini said, "Take me to Muzaffar Ahmad." "He is in jail," Ramesh replied. It is strange that neither Dange nor Singaravelu had informed Nalini of my arrest. Nalini told me in Kanpur Jail that he had gone straight to Ramesh's mess ; that it was from Ramesh he had first heard of my arrest; and so on. Ramesh Dasgupta also confirmed this after my release. There are some who have given a different account.

Nalini was arrested in Calcutta on December 20, 1923. He was then staying underground at Kankurgachi. After his arrest, he made a long statement to the police mixing fact and fiction in the manner of the Arabian Nights. Once after concluding his statement for the day, he said, "I have many things else to say. I shall say them tomorrow."

On the first occasion, in 1921, M. N. Roy *sent Nalini Gupta to India* to contact his terrorist revolutionary friends. There is mention of this in his *Memoirs*. Further, in one of his letters to a certain terrorist friend he wrote, "I sent Nalini to India to secure news about you."

*On the second occasion, in 1923, he was sent to India to recruit students for the Communist University for the Toilers*

*of the East in Moscow.* Nalini was incapable of carrying out this highly responsible mission ; in fact, he failed. He sent only one student, Gopendrakrishna Chakravarty, who also found himself in trouble. I shall come to that later.

In Kanpur Jail Nalini gave me a long account of every thing that had happened after his second visit to Calcutta. The account was like this :

After coming to Calcutta he could not find me. Unable to find any place to stay in, he went to Dr Meghnad Saha, who had met him in a hospital in Berlin. In his statement to the police, Nalini said that he had met Dr Saha in London. Anyway, Nalini told me that Dr Saha had considered his request sympathetically. Dr Saha took him to Subhaschandra Basu and spoke about his need for a shelter. At that time Subhas Basu had been making efforts to bring together the two major terrorist revolutionary parties. He sent for Upendranath Bandopadhyaya of Jugantar and Ramesh Chaudhuri of Anushilan and asked them to get Nalini a shelter. It was a habit with Nalini to blab that he knew to make explosives between thirty minutes and an hour of his introduction to anybody. Ramesh Chaudhury was delighted to hear this and told Upendra Bandopadhyaya that he himself would arrange a shelter for Nalini. Bandopadhyaya left in a happy frame of mind. He had heard many reports against Nalini.

But Ramesh Chaudhury was pleased enough to take Nalini Gupta to Dacca. There Nalini started teaching a number of young men how to make explosives. Abani Mukherjee also was in Dacca then. When Nalini heard of this, he became agitated and said, "I will kill him." Nalini, of course, did not tell me about this murderous desire of his. I heard it from someone else. Pratul Gangopadhyaya, the terrorist leader, prized Abani Mukherjee more than he did Nalini. Nalini had to leave Dacca. A member of Anushilan Samiti told me that about this time Charubikash Datta of Chittagong came and took Nalini along with him. Afterwards they were somewhere in Khulna.

*One Akhil used to stay with Nalini at Kankurgachi. Nalini told me that this Akhil was Ramesh Acharya, the leader of Anushilan Samiti. Nalini was a prolific liar, and it was difficult for me to know the truths from the lies.*

After his arrest on December 20, 1923, Nalini gave statements to the police day after day. At the end of his first series of statements, the police sent the report to the Government that there was nothing against Nalini to get him convicted in a court of law, and, therefore, a warrant under Regulation III of 1818 should be issued against him. Nalini was made a state prisoner sometime in January, 1924.

Ghulam Hussain was a lecturer in Edwards Mission College in Peshawar. From Peshawar he got into touch with Muhammad Ali, the dearest friend of his student days, in Kabul. Then he obtained a temporary appointment in Kabul and spent some time in the company of his friend, Muhammad Ali. There was plenty of money at Muhammad Ali's disposal to be spent for expanding the activities of the Communist Party in India. Out of this, Muhammad Ali gave a large sum to Ghulam Hussain, which, as it appears from the latter's statement of confession, amounted Rs. 25,000/-. After his return to India, he resigned his service in Mission College and went to Lahore. He did, it is true, some work of organization but at the same time he purchased a piece of land in Lahore and got a pucca house built for himself. His so-called party career began in dishonesty. He could not bear hardship at all. Those who embrace revolutionary politics have to remain always prepared for a life of sufferings. However, when Ghulam Hussain became a state prisoner under Regulation III of 1818, he broke down at the very beginning, although as a college teacher he had some prestige of his own, besides the prestige enjoyed separately by his family. His grandfather, Alla Ditta, a retired Government officer, was an eminent eye-surgeon. As he was known to Sir Malcolm Hailey, allowances under different heads were sanctioned for him and his family. Still, he could not in any way stand being penned up within the four walls of the jail. He started making a statement. When, in course

of making his statement, he heard that we would be prosecuted for conspiracy and he also would be one of the accused, he started virtually to weep. His statement became a regular *Mahabharat*. At that time, Muhammad Shafiq was being tried under Sec. 121-A of the Penal Code in the conspiracy case in Peshawar (Sessions Case No. 26, 1924 ; Home Department, Political, File No. 264 of 1924). Exploiting his weakness, the Home Department of Government of India pressed him to give evidence against Muhammad Shafiq ; and he did accordingly.

I am quoting here the last few lines from the appeal sent by Ghulam Hussain to the Governor-General-in-Council on January, 14, 1924 :

“In case there be any circumstances casting any suspicion or doubt on the integrity of what I have submitted most respectfully, I am prepared to explain it without any reservation. Deeply as I have erred, my sufferings have been no less deep. I acknowledge my mistake. It was a crime. Fatality alone dragged me into these circumstances, otherwise all this ill accords with my calibre. I was engaged in a conspiracy against the Bolsheviks. The little amount of political work that I did, a blind to secure a part of their ill gotten gold, and there I am in prison broken and annihilated. In spite of my sins I hope your Excellency's Government will mercifully take a lenient view of me. I will not ever attempt a similar experience. So help me God!”

The case against Ghulam Hussain also was withdrawn. Finally, there remained four of us accused :

- (1) Shaukat Usmani
- (2) Nalinibhusan Dasgupta
- (3) Muzaffar Ahamad
- (4) Sripat Amrit Dange

The inquiry into the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case began on March 17, 1924, in the court of the Joint Magistrate of Kanpur, Mr W. Christie. A day or two ago, the recording of the final statement of confession made by Ghulam Hussain on oath before the additional District Magistrate of Lahore, Mr Munir Hussain, had been completed.

In the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case there were no lawyers for the defence at the magistrate's Court. I have already mentioned that even at the stage of preparation for the case, Mr Ross Alston, a barrister of the Allahabad High Court, was appointed as counsel for the State at a daily fee of Rs. 1,000/-. Mr S. R. Das (Satishranjan Das), Advocate-General of Bengal, drafted the petition of complaint for the case. According to the convention of those times, the Advocate-General of Bengal was also Legal Adviser to the Government of India. Mr Ross had demanded the appointment of an Englishman as magistrate to conduct the inquiry before committing the case to the session. Mr Christie was the English Magistrate.

It was among the visitors in the Joint Magistrate's Court I first saw Satyabhakta. He wore European clothes, and a turban perhaps to hide the holy tuft of hair on his head. It was Satyabhakta who later wanted to form the "Indian Communist Party".

### **Dange's Private Secretary**

Vasudev Hari Joshi was a newly-won friend of Dange's. He came at the same time as Dange to Kanpur when the latter was transferred there after his arrest. He also sat in the visitors' block in the Magistrate's Court. One day when the court was in session, he was taking notes of who knows what. The Magistrate was an overbearing young man. As soon as his eyes fell on Joshi, he shouted, "Who are you there taking notes without my permission?"

Twenty-four years old, short-statured Dange sprang to his feet and promptly said, "Your Honour, he is Mr. V. H. Joshi, my private secretary. I have asked him to take notes."

The Magistrate relented and said, "Why didn't you take my permission?"

Vasudev Hari Joshi felt flattered at this and from that day started putting himself forward as S. A. Dange's private secretary, and thus he remained Dange's private secretary for many years. During the trial of the Meerut Conspiracy Case,



he wanted to go secretly to Moscow to plead with the Communist International but he was arrested in the dock area of Bombay. Many years later, I heard the Dange and Vasudev Joshi had quarrelled and broken off. I heard subsequently that Vasudev Joshi had died.

There was another noteworthy incident in the Magistrate's Court. I have already mentioned that neither we nor Dange had any counsel in the lower court. Vasudev Joshi had in the meantime boosted Dange, short of stature as he was, as a great personality among the not so numerous Maratha residents of Kanpur. Dange could have had a lawyer to defend him. A case under Sec 121-A of the Penal Code can be tried only by a Sessions Court. Why should we, we thought, for nothing open our lips in the lower court?

### **Dange's Statement in The Lower Court**

Under Sec. 364 of Criminal Procedure Code of 1898, in a case of this kind the inquiring magistrate can summon the accused in the witness box and question him. The reply of the accused is not admissible as evidence because it is not given on oath. Dange also was asked questions and he gave also the usual replies, like 'yes' or 'no'. Lastly, he was asked:

*Q. Have you any more to say ?*

A. My studies in economy had convinced me that as India was being industrialised a working class would be created in India. The industrialisation of the country was being carried on by the British capital with the help of native capital. That native capital was struggling to get the hold of the monopoly to exploit Indian wealth. That this struggle was expressed in the movement called the nationalists' movement. That the native capital wanted to use the working class towards its own ends. I wanted the working class to fight for its economic betterment. and as I thought that capitalism is western product, the working class must fight on western lines and that socialism was the expression of that movement. I started to spread the doctrine of socialism even before Mr. M. N. Roy was heard

in India to be working on behalf of the Communist International. I wrote a book and started a paper: the book and the paper were sent to press in Europe as well as in India. That perhaps attracted the attention of M. N. Roy and the convention. When the sessions of the convention were being held in 1922 an individual was sent to me, he met me in Bombay, he represented himself to be coming to me under a mandate from the convention. He did not show me any document and asked me if I could attend the sessions of the convention. Mr Ashleigh\* was the name of the gentleman. In one of the exhibits, he is referred to as Mr. Nandalal (see Ex. 6). I asked him about the intentions and the policy of Mr. M. N. Roy and the convention. When I was given to understand that it meant the breaking away of India from the British Empire I told him that I could not join the convention or attend the sessions. After that as I was given the address of M. N. Roy by Mr. Ashley, I addressed him on the subject. Meanwhile I was going on with my work of socialist propaganda. As it was a necessity for me as an editor to have complete knowledge of the European movement I maintained connections with Roy in order to get the required information. Reuter telegraphed Roy's programme in India. I disapproved of his programme through my paper. As regards the visit of Mr Ashley and my connections with Roy I issued statement in the Vernacular press on 5. 7. 23 stating the facts as they were. I am not a member of the conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India by a violent revolution ; neither have I assisted the furtherance of any such conspiracy and if it lies within the power of this Court I beg to be acquitted.

*Sd/- R. A. W. Christie*

*Sd/- S. A. Dange*

The above is the full and true record of the statement given by Dange accused and it was recorded by me and read over to accused.

*Sd/- W. Christie*

28.3.'24

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\*Charles Ashleigh

Dange did not give us the slightest hint that he would make a statement like this in the lower court. I have written a lot about Charles Ashleigh earlier, I am asking everybody to compare that account with this statement of Dange's so that he can see its numerous inconsistencies. Charles Ashleigh was in Bombay from April 18 to April 22, 1922. He came to India with passage money for possible delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. The Congress was held from November 5 to December 5. Only Dange can say why he referred to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International as a 'convention'.

In the Kanpur Jail Dange caused us a lot of trouble. He is full of complexities. He was always apprehensive of appearing inferior in comparison with others, although there was absolutely no ground for this. Vasudev Joshi his champion, carried on incessant propaganda in his favour. Among the Maratha residents of Kanpur he elevated Dange to the rank, if not of Tilak, of one nearest him.

Of the four accused, three - (i) Shaukat Usmani, (ii) Muzaffar Ahmad and (iii) Nalini Gupta - were state prisoners, i.e. prisoners under Regulation III of 1818. Even with the warrants pending, cases were filed against them under Sec. 121-A of the Penal Code. This, as far as I understood, was illegal. But who would challenge it? As for the lawyer, they understood nothing. Anyway, since warrants under Regulation III of 1818 were still pending against us, the Intelligence Bureau had accordingly to provide us with food & clothes. The Director himself was present in Kanpur. But Dange had serious objection to this arrangement. "No more of Regulation III here!" he said. We then said, "To hell with Regulation III here! We shall stay as ordinary undertrial prisoners." We did not want to quarrel with Dange.

The first hearing in the lower court began on March 17, 1924. The cases in Peshawar, the Moscow Conspiracy Case particularly, had not been attended with propaganda. In the Kanpur Communist Case, however, it was the Government of India that made all arrangements for propaganda. It was at

their request, representatives of Reuter and the Associated Press were present all the time in the court. On behalf of the Government of India the press reporters were briefed by the Government of India to use the heading- "Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case". In Britain the Government wanted to use the Kanpur Communist Case to carry on before the world the propaganda that there had been Bolshevik infiltration in India.

On April 1, 1924, Mr. W. Christie, the inquiring magistrate, signed the committal order written by him. All the four accused were committed to the sessions.

The trial was to be held in the court of one of the worst Sessions Judges not only in the whole of India, but, it may be said, also in the whole world. His name was H. E. Holme. In February, 1922, there had been a small uprising of peasants in Chauri Chaura in the district of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. The peasants had attacked and set fire to an outpost of the oppressive police force. There had been altogether twenty-one policemen there, and all of them were burnt to death. The case was tried by Judge Holme in the Sessions Court. It is not known how the actual culprits were found out from among a huge number of persons or how the Judge took evidence against them. It was an entirely absurd affair. But Mr Holme's heart was filled with malice and vindictiveness. He pronounced death sentence in the same case and simultaneously on 172 persons. That day even Englishmen residing in India hid their heads from shame. The Allahabad High Court called for the papers at once and upheld the sentence in respect of only about ten or twelve persons.

It was the same Sessions Judge who was going to try us. As it took time to make the multifarious arrangements, the Sessions Court could not sit before April 22, 1924. As in the Magistrate's Court, here also we found a Lewis gun placed outside the court. The arrangements in the court-room in Kanpur where sessions case were tried looked odd to me. The Judge's dais had been set up close to one of the walls. On the floor below there were chairs for the lawyers and the

visitors also. Anyone coming into the court from outside would find us first. The prisoners' dock was behind them, which was indeed good for us. We could, if we wanted, snatch a conversation or two with the visitors and we did that. It was thus I made the acquaintance of Rajkumar Sinha, a Bengali domiciled in Kanpur. He was then staying home after appearing in the I.Sc. examination from Banaras Hindu University. Others, including Jogeshchandra Chattopadhyaya in Gandhi cap, also came with him. Later, Rajkumar Sinha and Jogesh Chattopadhyaya received long-term sentences in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Chattopadhyaya was mad with vanity. Who knows what he was so vain about ? During the All-India Krishak Conference in Gaya, he was pulled up sharply by Prof. Ranga for trying to put himself and his associates forward as the only revolutionaries. Ranga asked him not to say things which he did not understand. Chattopadhyaya was silenced.

I have already said that we had no lawyers in the lower court. We found that an advocate and a barrister had been engaged for the Sessions trial. I have already written about Vasudev Joshi, Dange's friend and so-called private secretary. He was a steadfast propagandist for Dange, and his propaganda drew the enthusiasm of G. G. Jog, a Maharashtrian resident of Kanpur. Mr Jog held a good post in Kamal Tower, a firm of Juggilal Kamalpat. He was a Congress leader of Kanpur. Vasudev Joshi set up a defence committee with him and certain other persons. Dange was connected with all this. I am not very certain, but, most probably, Ganeshshankar Vidyarthi also was a member of this committee. This committee engaged an advocate from Allahabad, whose name was Kapildev Malaviya,, a nephew of Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya. Whether for his being a Congressman or for other reason, I don't know, the Jogs were very intimate with Kapildev. They earnestly wanted to see Kapildev established in the legal profession, Mr Jog used to say frankly that conviction of the accused being inevitable, there was no harm for anybody if Kapildev made some reputation out of the case.

### **Our Lawyers**

So far about the advocate. Now I shall say something about the barrister. Mr Manilal Doctor (Shah) was a barrister. 'Doctor' was his family title; the real surname was Shah. He came from Gujarat, probably from the State of Baroda; at least, he received his education in Baroda. Refused appointment by Arabinda Ghose in the Education Department, he had to enter the profession of law. He had, therefore, a life-long grudge against Arabinda Ghose. After passing the M.A. and the LL.B. Examinations and having enrolled himself in some court in India, he went to London for the Bar-at-law examintaion. There he came into contact with three Indian revolutionary leaders, Savarkar, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Kashiprasad Jayaswal. He said later that he could not accept their politics of establishing a Hindu Kingdom. On Gandhiji's advice he went to South Africa. He was happy there, but became estranged with Gandhiji on the question of continence. Gandhiji, he said, had turned to asceticism after having fathered a good number children. For him, he had married only recently or was engaged (I cannot exactly remember) ; so how could he practise continence? Manilal left Gandhiji's ashram and travelled in the British colonies, but the British Government did not let him stay in peace anywhere. He was last in the island of Fiji. The British Government expelled him even from there. He then returned to India. During our trial in Kanpur, he was in Gaya in Bihar. I know that he was interested in the trade union movement. But up to the time of my arrest on May 17, 1923, I knew nothing about the fact that Abani Mukherjee had got into contact with him and attempted to bring out a manifesto jointly with him. As he failed in the legal profession, so in his political career also he got involved in a very dirty affair. Manilal Doctor was a straight-forward person. He was not a barrister of the calibre required to conduct the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case. As for Pandit Kapildev Malaviya, he also was no better.

I have said earlier that I had kept Rs. 740/- with Qutbuddin

Ahmed. He spent the money for our defence. He sent Abdul Halim to Gaya to engage Manilal Doctor, and this was how the latter was engaged. He was engaged only to conduct the case in the Sessions Court. I cannot remember what it was agreed to pay him Rs 500 or 600, but he was engaged to defend all the four accused. I have already mentioned that Kapildev was engaged by friends in Kanpur, G. G. Jog, Vasudev Joshi, etc.

While studying in London Mr Jiwanlal Kapoor, a barrister in Lahore and later a judge of the Supreme Court of India, was sympathetic towards us. He also expressed his willingness to defend us in the Sessions Court, but Manilal Doctor had been engaged already.

### **Attempt to Engage Jinnah Fails**

Ours being an international movement, defence committees were formed abroad, including one in London. Charles Ashleigh, about whom I have written before, became secretary of this committee. I have written that George Lansbury also was interested in our defence. Friends in London requested Mr M. A. Jinnah through Mr Marmaduke Pickthall or, it may be, through some solicitors' firm in London to accept the brief for the accused. Although he did not refuse, he demanded £2000 (Rs. 30,000/-) as his fee. Considering that Mr C. Ross Alston's daily fee was Rs. 1,000.-, Jinnah was not prepared to show towards Communist prisoners the sympathy, usually shown by lawyers in defending accused persons in political cases. In this respect, he was a class-conscious person.

### **Roy's Attempt**

Now Manabendranath did an unexpected thing. He sent a message to Mr. I. B. Sen (Indubhusan Sen), a barrister of the Calcutta High Court, to represent him in the court in Kanpur. Probably, Manabendranath did not know I. B. Sen when he was in India ; otherwise, he could never have asked I. B. Sen to appear in a criminal case. Mr I. B. Sen practised in the civil side of the Calcutta High Court. Because of some slight defect

in his tongue, he never argued in court. But he was extremely capable in drafting complaints and written statements, and this was the cause of his reputation in the Calcutta High Court. Anyway, I. B. Sen did not go to Kanpur to appear for Roy.

There was no unanimity among us in jail. Dange had the impression that we suspected him. He was not detained without trial along with us ; he wrote against our programme telegraphed by Reuter. I did not like all this. He made no effort to send delegates to the Fourth Congress even after receiving passage money for them. He pocketed a fat sum. The Bombay Government did not want to proceed against Dange on the ground that if he were left outside jail, he would be a source of information for them. Dange knew all this and thought that possibly we also were in the know. The thought that we were suspecting him rankled him constantly. But that he had betrayed us in respect of the passage money for delegates ; that the Bombay Government had made special efforts but failed to keep him out of jail ; and that the Secretary of State for India had refused to pay any heed to the Bombay Government's suggestion - about all these we knew nothing at all.

Nalini Gupta was a past master in the art of stirring up quarrels between one another. But we are obliged to him for not poisoning our lives by setting the four of us to fly at one another's throat. He would tell us stories about where, how and whom he had set against whom. During such reminiscences he even told us that it was he who had provoked the quarrel between Surendranath Kar and M. N. Roy, which led Suren Kar to leave M. N. Roy and go over to Dr Bhupendranath Datta's group.

### **Our Inclinations in Jail**

At the time of returning to India on the first occasion in 1921, Shaukat Usmani had conspired secretly with Abdur Rab and Acharya. He had promised to carry on organizational work for them in India. When this became known, Usmani apologised to Roy. Nalini Gupta would rake this up and tease Usmani. Lying on his bed, Usmani would mutter as if in sleep, "Let



me go to the big house once, and I'll get even with you." 'Big house' meant the Communist International.

How can I speak for myself? But I think I never behaved unbecomingly.

### **Dividing The Accused**

I have mentioned earlier that Manilal Doctor and Kapildev Malaviya were engaged as lawyers for us. If all the accused had been represented as a single party, then, according to the procedure of the court, Manilal Doctor would have been the senior counsel and Kapildev his junior. But G. G. Jog, after consulting Dange, made the two lawyers independent of each other. I, at least, had no objection to this arrangement, but the way that divided the accused made Usmani and me feel like hiding our heads from shame. We two fell to Manilal Doctor's share, and Nalini Gupta and Dange to that of Pandit Kapildev Malaviya, Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya's nephew. Looked at otherwise, Nalini Gupta of Calcutta and Sripat Anrit Dange of Bombay, having Hindu names, were divided into one lot and Muzaffar Ahmad of Calcutta and Shaukat Usmani of Kanpur, having Muslim names, into another.\* It was Dange who had worked out this division through his friends, Vasudev Hari Joshi, and G. G. Jog. Dange and Nalini had become friends suddenly in jail. Just for having Hindu names, one accused person from Calcutta and another from Bombay were grouped together. Again, for having Muslim names, one accused person from Calcutta and another from

\* When we (Nalini, Dange, Usmani and I) came together in Kanpur District Jail, Nalini and Dange gave us the impression that they had not met earlier in Bombay in 1923. Long afterwards in 1964, I found out from Nalini's statement to the police that Nalini and Dange had met in Bombay in 1923. This can be seen also from Dange's letter to M. N. Roy. Moreover, in his elaborate speech of 1964 Dange said that he had saved Nalini from arrest and sent him to Calcutta, but it was in Calcutta and from Muzaffar's custody that Nalini had been arrested. Liars have weak memories. Dange knew that Muzaffar had been in Jail since long before Nalini's arrival in Calcutta.

Kanpur were grouped together. The two from Calcutta could easily have been divided into one lot and there was no harm in dividing the other two into another lot. This arrangement would not have affected, one way or the other, the sentences passed upon the accused, but the prestige of us all would have been saved and Jog and friends could have pushed Pandit Kapildev Malaviya up as much as they pleased. But Kapildev was a very junior lawyer, not even entitled then to practise at the High Court. Anyway, this was the backdrop against which the case against us opened at the Sessions Court.

I want to record a few things here although they are not relevant at this stage. When I was a state prisoner, I had very little connections outside. I did not even know whether or not Abdul Halim was in Calcutta. So, two or three days before my transfer to Kanpur, from Calcutta Presidency Jail I wrote a letter to Abdul Halim at his address at Kirnahar. When, after accepting our brief, Manilal Doctor came to Kanpur Jail and met me, I learnt from him that Abdul Halim had gone to Gaya to engage him. I was extremely happy to learn that a life of extreme hardships and sufferings had failed to break Abdul Halim's spirit. Later, during our trial, Abdul Halim twice came to Kanpur and met us.

As a state prisoner, I stayed the longest period in Dacca Central Jail. It was here one day, all on a sudden, commenced a prank. The Inspector-General of Prisons in Bengal was a man called Lieutenant-Colonel Thomson. Except for being in jails under his jurisdiction, prisoners under Regulation III of 1818 had nothing to do with him. They were entirely the responsibility of the Jail Superintendent or the District Magistrate. The Government of India had to pay for their food and clothing and all other expenses. But the Government of Bengal informed the Government of India that they would bear all expenses for the prisoners. Thomson's prank was behind this move.

On June 8, 1923, Lord Reading signed the 'order-in-council' (reproduced earlier in this book) for the arrest of

three persons, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani and Ghulam Hussain. I was then in the Lalbazar lock-up of the Calcutta Police. From there I was taken to the police office in Lalbazar and was served on June 16, 1923 with this order signed by Mr J Crerar, Home Secretary to the Government of India. It was stated therein that I was to be detained in New Alipore Central Jail, and I was sent there at once. I found there 15/16 long-term prisoners, transferred from Andaman Jail. They received special treatment in jail. There was a separate kitchen also for them. My meal came from there. The food was not so bad and included meat and fish. The District Magistrate of 24-parganas, Mr Lodge, told me that a separate kitchen would be set up for me in my ward and my food would be cooked there, as food from the other kitchen could not suit me. I told him that this arrangement suited me. I did not want to get completely separated from the long term political prisoners. The authorities accepted my suggestion, but they informed the Government of India that Muzaffar Ahmad did not cost them, much, for his bill (probably from June 16 to June 30) had totalled Rs. 19/2 only. Anyway, this was how I passed three months and nine days in Alipore Jail. I was then the only state prisoner in the whole of Bengal.

On September 25, 1923, the tenth day after my third month in jail, some more state prisoners arrived in Alipore New Central Jail in Calcutta. Among them were Dr Jadugopal Mukhopadhyaya, Professor Jyotish Ghosh, Bhupati Majumdar, Amarendra Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendrakumar Datta, Monoranjan Gupta, Upendra Bandopadhyaya, Monomohan Bhattacharyaya, Rabin Sen, Amritalal Sarkar and Ramesh Chaudhury. As far as I can remember, some of them were transferred on the same day or the day after, to Midnapore Central Jail. I was transferred to Dacca Central Jail.

Completely segregated from the world outside, I was passing my days in Dacca Central Jail. Here also I was the only state prisoner. Of course, Satish Chakravarty came there, but he came much later.

**Kazi Imdadul Huq's Gesture of Affection**

Here one morning (long before Mr Satish Chakravarty's arrival) the jail authorities informed me that they had received instructions from the Government that a state prisoner would be given prison meal, but he could, if he wished, make his own arrangements to get food and other things from outside. Col. Thomson, Inspector-General of Prisons, had made some young English officer the Home Department sign the instructions and got this thing through. I did not know what I could do alone. I hoped that there were other state prisoners in other jails ; they would certainly fight. I went without any food that day. Capt. B. G. Malia, the Superintendent, said, "I believe the order is to be withdrawn soon. You are ill and we will send you food from the jail hospital. If you have anyone you know outside, get your tea sent by him. Your letter will be sent by a special messenger." I was more or less a stranger in Dacca in 1923. I could not remember even the name of any person I knew who was not a Government employee. If I wrote to any ordinary employee, I might be exposing him to risk. I wrote a letter to Khan Bahadur Qazi Imdadul Huq, Secretary of the Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. I thought that he, in any case, would not lose his big post. He had been my colleague in Bangiya Musalman Shaitya Samiti and Headmaster of Calcutta Training School (Normal School) at that time. We used to visit his house. I had taken up in my arms his eldest son, nick-named Afzal, numerous times. Immediately on receiving my letter, Qazi Sahib sent me a tin of Lipton's tea, a big tin of Huntley Palmer's cream-cracker biscuits, one seer of sugar, and a tin of milk. That day he brushed aside the thought that men of the Intelligence Branch might record much adverse observations against him. I have never been able to forget this gesture of his affection. Even today, whenever I think of it, I feel overwhelmed.

The order, referred to above, was withdrawn within a few days. The Government sanctioned a daily allowance of Rs. 1/4 for our food. I do not want to give here a lengthy account

of the trial at the Sessions Court. The complainant, Col Kaye, deposed from the dock and was cross-examined by the defence, one of his statements at that time created a little confusion. He stated that, according to the report he had received from the Madras police, Nalini had crossed Dhanuskodi on November 24, 1921. According to Nalini, the date was December 24, not November 24. For those who come to India from abroad by way of Colombo, Dhanuskodi is the first place of entry into Indian territory. At Dhanuskodi the names of passengers are entered into a register, their passports carefully examined and their luggages also checked by the Customs.

Nalini was arrested in December, 1923 and on the 22nd of that month Nalini told the police that on his way to India he had travelled from Berlin to Marseilles by train in the middle of September, 1921. He had gone to the British Consulate there and got his passport renewed first. Then he had left for Colombo as a passenger aboard the French ship, *Aukor*. There is no mention in Nalini's statement of the date on which the ship had sailed from Marseilles. But in those days it took a French passenger ship eleven days to reach Colombo from Marseilles. Anyway, whatever might have been the date of his departure from Marseilles, before the ship had reached Colombo, Nalini began feeling pain in the appendix. Therefore, as soon as the ship sailed into the jetty, Nalini was removed to the Colombo Medical College Hospital. He had an operation there and was released from the hospital six weeks later. Taking all these things into account, we can say that it was possible for Nalini to reach Dhanuskodi on November 24, 1921.

I have reasons for going into so much calculation on this point. Previously I also had the impression that Nalini had reached Calcutta in the last week of November, 1921, and I have written so in some places. But after I had read statement to the police all my previous ideas got upset. I had to assume that Nalini had reached Calcuttya in the last week, not of November, but of December, 1921. But, even if the month of September were left out of account, Nalini could have easily

reached Dhanuskodi on November 24, 1921, after staying in the Colombo Medical College Hospital for the last three weeks of October (1921) and the first three weeks of November (1921); otherwise, where could he have been and what could he have been doing during the days preceding December 24, 1921? From Madras to Colombo is only a day's journey.

Anyway, the hearing at the Sessions Court gradually drew to an end and the Sessions Judge, Mr Holme, wanted some time to write his judgment. He had first fixed May 16 as the date for delivering his judgment, but he adjourned it afterwards to May 20, 1924. When we arrived at the court on the 20th, we found that the *khaskhas* (fibrous root of an Indian grass) screen which had been hung on the door to protect the accused from the *lu* (hot summer gusts of northern India) was no longer there, and there were none in the court-room except the Judge, his *peshkar* (bench-clerk), orderly and three or four policemen. The lawyers were gone; probably the court-inspector was present. Even Dange's friends were unable to reach the court.

Mr Holme hurriedly delivered the judgment that all the four accused—Sripat Amrit Dange, Muzffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani and Nalinibhusan Dasgupta—would each have to undergo rigorous imprisonment for four years. Having pronounced the sentence hurriedly, he ordered the policemen to take the prisoners back to jail at once.

I was told that Khan Sahib Amanatullah, who was then the Jailor of Kanpur District Jail belonged to Naini in the district of Allahabad. The warders told me that he had begun as a warder and became a jailor later in the course of service. During this period he had also studied English. During 1930's when the system of classification of prisoners into divisions I, II and III was first introduced in jails, Faizabd District Jail in the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) was converted into a special jail for division II prisoners. Khan Sahib Amanatullah, a Khan Bahadur already, became the first Superintendent of Faizabad Special Jail.

Anyway, to come back to ourselves. Immediately after our

return to jail, Khan Sahib made us change into the short drawers and short jackets of ordinary convicts of U. P. jails. He did not yet make us wear iron collars around our necks and iron shackles around our feet. The Sessions Judge, it is clear to everyone, did not recommend any special treatment for us. We were fortunate that he did not pass the maximum sentence of transportation for life upon us. Later, with our paper Khan Sahib went first to the Superintendent's quarters and then to the District Magistrate. The Magistrate ordered in writing that subject to the approval of the Government, the four of us, convicted prisoners, would be treated as 'first-class misdemeanant.' I have never enquired whether or not there is any regulation like this in the jails in Britain; perhaps, there is. Possibly, during the period of Khilafat-Non-co-operation movement also, respectable persons were treated similarly. The system of classification of prisoners in jails had not been introduced in the 1920s. Only those who have not committed felony are called misdemeanants. For the few days we were in Kanpur Jail as misdemeanants, we were allowed to wear our own clothes and also given comparatively good food.

This arrangement continued for a few days only. Finally, the Government sent information that the 'Bolshevik convicts' (as we were called) instead of receiving any special treatment should be degraded to the rank of ordinary convicts. This time we really became ordinary convicts, each with an iron collar around the neck, a shackle around our ankle, and in short jacket and short drawers. None the less, we were not herded with the ordinary convicts.

We told the Superintendent of the jail that we ourselves had not sent any petition to the Government for special treatment and as we ment to send one now, we should be supplied with writing materials. The Superintendent said that the matter having been finally decided, no petition would be allowed any longer. We went on a hunder-strike in protest. I do not know whether or not any order for transfer of the four of us to four different jails had been received previously, but we were transferred in the afternoon of the same day : Muzaffar Ahmad

to Rae-Bareilly District Jail, Shaukat Usmani to Bareilly Jail, Sripat Amrit Dange to Sitapur District Jail and Nalinibhusan Dasgupta to Gorakhpur District Jail. Before leaving Kanpur Jail, Dange and Nalini had broken their fast. Usmani and I left without taking any food, but this fact was not recorded in our history tickets. After reaching Rae-Bareilly Jail, I went without food for two more days. I broke my fast when the District Magistrate came and gave me permission to send the petition demanding special treatment to the Government. This petition of mine is in the National Archives. Needless to say, we were no longer treated as special convicts.

Let me say a few words about the situation in Kanpur Jail during the few days we were there after our conviction.

Dange said that he had written only four letters to M. N. Roy, and for that to be sentenced straightway to imprisonment for four years was not fair. As for Nalini Gupta, Dange said, he could very well be in prison for four years, for he had visited many places, in India and abroad, been to Moscow and attended the Third Congress of the Communist International. Dange further said that he had received only £50 from Roy, but why did Roy send him this money? He had never asked for any money. There are people who are ready to give him thousands. Dange was really referring to Ranchoddas Bhavan Lotvala. In fact, Dange had written a lot more than four letters and received a good deal more than £50. All these facts are now available from records.

Another day, at night, Dange said, "I have lost my wife." We, all of us, expressed commiseration and asked, "When did this tragedy occur?" "No, she is not dead," he said, "I am engaged to a girl. Would she now wait for me for four years?" "She will," we said.

In fact, the girl waited. Her name was Ushabai. She was a widow, perhaps widowed in childhood.

"I suffer from numerous ailments," said Nalini Gupta. "I might have survived a two-year-term. But it is absolutely impossible for me to survive four years in jail."



Dange and Nalini had been getting more and more friendly, but in the course of these few days this friendship crystallised.

### **The Appeal in the High Court**

After our trial and conviction in the Sessions Court, came the stage for appeal to the High Court. But who was to appeal, where was the money to be found, and who would appear as our lawyers? There was the possibility of our sentence being reduced on appeal. The case had been filed at the instigation of Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary. The British Government's intention was to tell the entire world that the Russians were spreading Bolshevism in India. Sir Malcolm Hailey, Home Member in the Governor-General's Executive Council, had written to Mr. S. R. Das, Advocate-General of Bengal, that the Government wanted to see the accused convicted, but the sentence should be light. They wanted to show the world that Bolshevism had infiltrated into India and also to prove that they were justified in applying Regulation III of 1818. Not to speak of this statement in Malcolm Hailey's letter, we have seen that even in a prohibited place like Peshawar most of the accused in the Moscow Conspiracy Case were sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment: only two were sentenced to two year's rigorous imprisonment.

As regards our appeal to the High Court, we earnestly wanted a good advocate or barrister to be appointed to represent us. Kapildev Malaviya was not an advocate of the High Court; the question, therefore, of his representing us in the High Court also did not arise at all then. Manilal Doctor was a barrister and was entitled to appeal also in the High Court.

We were in this state of mind when one day Nalini Gupta asked me to write for him a letter to Mr Jatindramohan Sengupta, the Calcutta barrister, requesting him to come to the Allahabad High Court and look after the appeal in respect of the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case. At that time I, at least, did not know that Dange's friends had other plans in mind. I protested saying that we would have to pay

Mr Sengupta his fees, passage money from Calcutta to Allahabad and back, and hotel charges also. Even if he declined the fees (there was no reason whatsoever for his declining fees from communists), the expenses would still be heavy. Who would pay for them? Nalini said, "You needn't worry. Mr Sengupta is a relation of mine. Every thing will be all right." Among the Hindus in Bengal, the vaidyas are a minority caste and it is said that among them everyone is related to everyone else. The letter was sent to Mr Sengupta and Nalini took it for granted that he would come. When comrade Halim had visited us, Nalini had told him also that Mr. J. M. Sengupta was coming to look after our appeal in the Allahabad High Court. This, I heard, was the rumour also in Calcutta.

When we were in Kanpur Jail, one morning a *wakalatnama* was sent to us for signature. It must have been sent by the defence committee set up on the initiative of Dange's friends. The *wakalatnama* bore the name of Pyarilal Banerji, the well-known advocate of Allahabad. We signed the *wakalatnama*. On July 7, 1924, we four were transferred illegally to four different jails; for under the rules no accused person could be transferred from one jail to another during the pendency of his appeal. He could be, however, transferred if the jail lay within a city where the appellate court was situated. But we were sent to distant jails. I had already applied for transfer to a jail in Calcutta. Now I made a second application stating that it was necessary for me to go to Calcutta in connection with my appeal, so that I could engage a lawyer from the Calcutta bar and contact my well-to-do friends there for funds. I stated also that if it was necessary for me to be in some jail in the United Provinces for the disposal of my appeal, from Kanpur I should have been transferred to some jail in Allahabad instead of Rae-Bareilly Jail. The Government turned down this application of mine on the plea that there were enough lawyers in the provincial bar to look after the appeal.

We did not receive any information from anywhere. We four were in Kanpur jail till July 7, 1924. But while we were there, nothing was heard from Nalini's 'relation', Mr. J. M.

Sengupta in reply to his letter. Nalini had a mischievous type of intelligence, an in born trait, which occasionally got the better of him. Who knows whether or not Nalini was prompted by this mischievous instinct of his to write to Mr J. M. Sengupta? Perhaps he was. Dange and Nalini were at that time inclined to think that it made little difference whether they filed the appeal or not; for they had already sued the Government for pardon and were under the impression that they would certainly be released. I will write about this in detail elsewhere.

I was in a miserable situation in Rae-Bareilly. I wrote secretly to my friend, Qazi Nazrul Islam, the famous Bengali poet. The letter fell in the hands of the authorities and I was severely punished by the Inspector-General of Jails of the United Provinces. This meant that for one year I would not be (i) granted any 'remission' and allowed (ii) to write or (iii) to receive letters from anybody outside or (iv) to have any interviews. This last prohibition created an intolerable situation for me, but the punishments were not applicable in respect of my appeal. The lawyers could interview me for this purpose and if necessary, get *wakalatnamas* signed by me. But none ever visited me. The defence committee in Kanpur were looking after the appeal also, but they kept me absolutely in the dark about the developments. While in Kanpur jail, after executing the *wakalatnama* in favour of Mr Pyarilal Banerji, the well-known advocate of Allahabad High Court, I had felt hopeful that having accepted our *wakalatnama*, Mr Banerje would represent us also in the court.

The plans and calculations of Mr. Jog and his friends in Kanpur were crystallising round their young friend, Kapildev Malaviya, although he was not an advocate of the High Court. There was never any meeting between them and us, at least between them and me. I had, therefore, no chance of knowing through conversations what was at the back of their minds. It was difficult for me to realize that they would put up a lawyer from the lower court in the High Court also. As Kanpildev practised in Allahabad, he would, I thought, be good enough to assist our advocate.

Mr Pyarilal Banerji signed the memorandum of the appeal to High Court. But I do not know whether his junior or his clerk, filed the appeal. Only two grounds were mentioned in the memorandum, and the Judges in the High Court made critical observations on the insufficiency of the grounds given there. The two grounds were:

#### GROUND

1. Because the conviction Under Section 121-a I.P.C. is not justified as no offence is made out.
2. Because the judge had relied on inadmissible evidence.

A bench consisting of (1) Hon'ble Sir Grimood Mears, Knight, Chief Justice and (2) Hon'ble Sir Theodore Caro Piggot, Knight, Judge, was set up by the High Court to try this appeal (Criminal Appeal No. 588, 1924).

It has been mentioned already that we had to depend for the appeal on the defence committee in Kanpur and also that our *wakalatnama*, executed in favour of Mr Pyarilal Banerji, was accepted by him and filed in the High Court. Nalini's letter to Mr. J. M. Sengupta gave rise to the rumour that he was coming to Allahabad to look after our appeal. Nalini himself helped in spreading this rumour. In fact, everything was still in the air. No one had engaged Mr Sengupta, for, in that case, he would have informed the Allahabad High Court. The rumour that Sengupta was coming was reaching also Mr Pyarilal Banerji's ears, and he must have been feeling aggrieved. Two days before the hearing of the appeal was to commence, our defence committee in Kanpur informed Mr Banerje that no one was coming from Calcutta and, therefore, he would have to argue the appeal before the High Court. He was not prepared at all for this and could, if he wished, have rudely rejected the request of the defence committee. I do not know much about court procedures but, I believe, if Mr Banerji had defaulted after accepting our *wakalatnama*, the High Court Judges might have taken exception. He, therefore, told the Judges everything and prayed for an adjournment to give him time to prepare. The Judges turned down his prayer on the

plea that, according to schedule, the hearing should have commenced in August. Pandit Kapildev Malaviya was present in the court, and as he had appeared for the accused in the lower court, he was given special permission to argue the appeal before the High Court.\*

This was a queer decision. I cannot recall having heard of any other instance of an eminent member of the bar being refused his reasonable prayer for adjournment. I have failed to find out from old newspapers whether Pandit Kapildev Malaviya applied for the special permission in advance or after the rejection of Mr. Pyarilal Banerji's prayer. Anyway, the situation was that while the High Court Judges refused to grant Mr. Banerji an adjournment, they granted a special privilege to a junior lawyer who was not an advocate of the High Court. I do not know why the Judges referred to the month of August in rejecting Mr. Pyarilal Banerji's prayer. The hearing, fixed for August, had to be postponed not for the sake of the prisoners but because of the Government's lack of preparations, and the autumn vacation also had arrived. The vacation Judges were, Dr. Shah Muhammad Suleim in and Mr. Lalgopal Mukherjee, Mr. Ross Alston, the barrister for the State, did not at all want the appeal to be heard by these two Judges. He wanted Gurnood Mears, then on holiday in England, to return. In this connection many letters passed between Ross Alston and the Home Department of the Government of India. The letters are on record.

Finally, it was Kapildev who argued the appeal. He made probably a good speech, but he did not know how to argue a case for the Communists. Whatever may be the personal views of a lawyer, he must identify himself with us, his clients. If Kapildev had carefully gone through the documents filed by the prosecution as evidence against us, he could have realized what we wanted. But he took a different line; otherwise, he could not have argued in the High Court

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\* *The Pioneer*, Allahabad, November 12, 1924.

that our actions should have been viewed with 'contempt' and that there was no need for prosecuting us and getting us convicted. Was this the message we wanted to put before the country. This argument did not help Kapildev either to get us acquitted or to get our sentence reduced. The Judges said, "This plea does not impress us." Instead of expressing his 'contempt' for our actions, he could have cited as precedence the Moscow Conspiracy Case in Peshawar. The prisoners sentenced to one year's imprisonment in Peshawar had then been released after completion of their term. He could have met Shaukat Usmani and got all information from him. The copy also of the judgement in the Peshawar Case was available with Mr. Kaye.

The hearing of the appeal before the High Court commenced on November 3 and ended on November 6, 1924. On November 10, the Allahabad High Court dismissed the appeal in respect of the Kanpur Communist (Bolshevik) Conspiracy Case.

The curtain came down here upon the Kanpur Communist (Bolshevik) Conspiracy Case. Of course, there are still many things which remain to be told.

The purpose of those who had set up the defence committee was also accomplished. Their friend, Pandit Kapildev Malaviya, appeared in the appeal also before the High Court. This was what they had wanted.

### **Wrong Translation Creates Confusion**

During our trial at the Sessions Court, many of M.N. Roy's letters were submitted there as evidence against us. I am reproducing here the English version of certain portions from two of these letters written in Bengali. The original letters can no longer be recovered by any means. The extracts are about Abani. I have discussed Abani Mukherjee in detail on pages 242-309 of this book.

The first letter (Exhibit No. 10) was written to me from Berlin on January 31, 1923. After his return to India, Abani Mukherjee devoted himself to the mission of destroying the

small movement we were building up in India. M. N. Roy wrote in this connection :

“Abani Mukherjee is a dangerous man. I brought him up like a snake on milk and plantain. Then all the worthies<sup>1</sup> here wanted to put him in jail as a British spy, it was only through me that his life was saved. Today he is a leader of this party<sup>2</sup>. So dreadful was arrogance. Any way I cannot pardon him any more. So, he is done for in the Universal Revolutionary Society.<sup>3</sup>”

The second letter was written by M. N. Roy from Berlin to Nalini Gupta in August, 1923. This was Exhibit No. 54 of the Kanpur Case. He wrote there :

“Where is that vagabond<sup>4</sup> gone ? Is he still in the Country ? If he comes here I shall perform his *Sradh*. I shall not make any mistake this time.”

Many readers have been misled by Mr Kunjabehari Roy's literal translation. The greatest victims have been foreign writers. I know Mr Kunjabehari Roy. He is a well-educated person. In 1918, I worked with him (under him, to be precise) for a short period in the Bengali Translator's Office of the Bengal Government. He did this job of translation throughout his career.

This literal translation, I believe, was done at the request of the police. ‘To perform one's *Sradh* (i.e., obsequies) is a Bengali idiom meaning ‘to take one severely to task.’ It does not at all carry the idea of ‘murdering’ Abani Mukherjee. The letter written to me (Exhibit No. 10) is dated January 31, 1923. Roy had not yet received the letters forged by Abani. But they reached his hands long before he wrote the letter to Nalini in August of the same year. I am asking everybody to compare the extract from the letter written to

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<sup>1</sup> Nationalist revolutionaries.

<sup>2</sup> India Independence Party

<sup>3</sup> Abani Mukherjee was expelled from the Communist Party of India and the ranks of the Communist International.

<sup>4</sup> Abani Mukherji.

Nalini (Exhibit No. 54) with the extract from the letter written to me (Exhibit No. 10).

By rendering literally—probably at the request of the police—a Bengali idiom which does not admit of such translation, Mr Kunjabihari Roy had created a great confusion. This has led foreigners to conclude that M. N. Roy wanted to murder Abani Mukherjee.

“But they (the British) also knew that he was working against Roy, and it, therefore, seems likely that they felt it would be more damaging to the Communist movement to allow him to remain free to cause trouble for Roy. According to British intelligence, Mukherjee was enough of a nuisance to provoke Roy into expressing his determination to have Mukherjee murdered if he should ever return to India. (Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller : *Communism in India*, p. 67.)

If Kunjabehari Roy had not translated M. N. Roy's letter to Nalini literally, all this discussion would not have been necessary. Among the Hindus in India the *Sradh* is performed after one's death. So, how could Roy perform Abani's *Sradh*, as he said he would, without murdering Abani ? This was how the idea of murder got into the heads of men of the British intelligence and foreign writers.

In India, the *Sradh* of a deceased person cannot be performed just by anybody. It can be done only by person vested by religion with the right to do it. M. N. Roy did not possess this right. Besides, being a leader of the international Communist movement, how could he perform anybody's *Sradh* ? Abani Mukherjee went back to Berlin in April, 1924, and M. N. Roy also was there at the time; but Abani Mukherjee was not murdered.

In the Soviet Union Abani Mukherjee had a wife who was a Soviet citizen. His son was a Soviet citizen by birth. Abani sought Soviet citizenship on this ground and obtained it in 1925. What is strange is that the vile slanders he indulged in against the Communist International in his letter to the British Prime Minister, Mr MacDonald, did not



stand in the way of his getting Soviet citizenship. Needless to say, the Government of India had granted him also the passport to return to India, the only condition being that he would have to make his own arrangements. There was no case pending against him in India. He was not accused in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case. His name was dropped although it had been included in the original list of the accused. There was nothing standing in the way of his returning to India.

The defence committee in Kanpur had raised funds. When, after the trial in the sessions court, Judge Holme was writing his judgement, an uncle of Shaukat Usmani's came from Bikaner to see him. He brought some money with him. I cannot recall now what the exact amount was, Rs. 250/- or Rs. 300/-; but it was certainly not below Rs. 250/-. There is mention of Rs. 350/- in the police records. Shaukat Usmani asked his uncle to leave the money with the defence committee for the purpose of the appeal in the High Court, and he did accordingly. Mr Ruikar also sent some money from Nagpur. Mr Jog and his friends surely knew that they would, some way or other, put up Pandit Kapildev Malaviya in the High Court also. Then why did they ask for money from London? A defence committee was set up in London also. George Lansbury, M. P., was associated with it. He was also known to Pandit Motilal Nehru. I have already spoken of comrade Charles Ashleigh. He was the secretary of the defence committee in London. Mr Jog and his friends approached Pandit Motilal Nehru and made him send a telegram to George Lansbury for money. The defence committee sent £47 (Rs. 705/-) in two or three instalments. The defence committee in London, however, protested to Motilal Nehru against Kapildev Malaviya's arguments in the High Court which were being reported in the British newspapers.

Pandit Kapildev Malaviya belonged to Allahabad and practised in the lower court there. Mr Jog and his friends had enough money to pay him a daily fee of Rs. 50/-, even without requiring any money at all from London.

Mr Jog was mad about Dange and Nalini, both of whom repented and sued the Government for pardon. Kapildev, who argued our appeal in the High Court, did not think it necessary to inform me of even such developments as the dismissal of our appeal there. I was not allowed to read newspapers. As none of the accused had been acquitted, it would have taken two months for me to receive the official communication of the dismissal of our appeal. Dr. D. K. Mukherjee, of course, gave me the information, probably, on the next day. Dr. Mukherjee was the Civil Surgeon of the district of Rae-Bareilly and Superintendent of Rae-Bareilly District Jail. Although he was a Bengali, he never spoke a single word of Bengali to me. He was afraid even of his subordinates, whose suspicion might have been roused if he had spoken to me in Bengali.

### **Popular Impressions about the Bolshevik case**

In those days, it was through the English newspapers that news about any incident was disseminated all over the country. To a great extent this is the practice also today. All the vernacular newspapers used to reproduce news from the English newspapers. No publicity was given to the Conspiracy Cases in Peshawar. The Government of India did not want that. The news-agencies conducted their service in English. Reuter published news from abroad in India and Indian news abroad, but they did not report news from one part of India to another. For this purpose there was the Associated Press of India, which disseminated Indian news within India. I have heard that some reports about the Peshawar Conspiracy Case appeared in the Urdu newspapers. But the Associated Press did not collate these reports and publish English versions of them elsewhere. The Government, perhaps, had forbidden that.

But by the time the Kanpur Conspiracy Case was held, there had been a change in the policy of the Government of India. The Government decided that they themselves would conduct propaganda against us with the help of the newspapers. They arranged for representatives of Reuter and the Associated

Press to be present all the time in the court. They attended not only the Magistrate's Court and the Sessions Court but possibly—I am not sure—the High Court also. Mr Ayenger was an able journalist. I cannot remember his full name. He earned considerable reputation in the world of journalists in Delhi later. With one assistant he managed the job for both Reuter and the Associated Press. The day the preliminary inquiry into the case commenced in the Magistrate's Court, Colonel Cecil Kaye (Director of the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department of the Government of India and Complainant in the case for the Government of India) called the representatives of Reuter and the Associated Press and told them to report the case under the heading 'Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case'. From the next morning the word '*Bolshevik*' began to be read and uttered all over India, from Assam to Bombay and from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. Did this campaign result only in hatred gathering all around us? Didn't it also attract the attention of anybody towards us too and also serve to some extent the purpose of propaganda for us at Government's expense and at the price of our imprisonment? Yes, it did. The Communists of China fought their enemies with weapons seized from them. The Kanpur Conspiracy Case was an organized campaign of propaganda against us and the Soviet State. There could be no campaign without printed documents. Since those documents were exhibited in the case, extracts from them must have appeared in the newspapers. Many read these extracts and hungered for more. Whatever might have been the calculations of the British, however much we might have suffered, the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case provided inspiration also to our movement. To some extent, it contributed to the considerable accession of strength which took place in our movement up to the year 1928. The programme and the manifesto, circulated in the Congress session at Gaya in 1922, had also laid the groundwork for our propaganda.

During our trial in the Session Court in Kanpur, among the school students at least there was impression that we

would at least be Europeans and fierce-looking persons. But when they came to the court and saw us, they exclaimed, "But Jove, these are Indians". Grown-up people also came to see as people do during all political trials. But I never saw a big crowd. I do not know whether the sight of the Lewis gun scared anybody away, for a Lewis gun was placed not only in the Magistrate's Court but in the Sessions Court also.

After the publication of the judgement in the Sessions Court, many newspapers wrote in support of as well as against us. But it was the Government that gained out of the cases in Peshawar. There was, for all practical purposes very little propaganda for the accused. But the Kanpur Case was launched, keeping in view a particular ideology (Bolshevism), and plenty of ideological documents also were filed in the court. It was a completely new type of case, and it was not easy also for the newspapers to comment on it. The Sessions Judge delivered his judgement on May 20, 1924. On May 22, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the English daily of Calcutta, wrote a lengthy editorial on it, pointing out, one by one, especially instances of lapses on points of law on the part of the court. In fact, many such lapses had occurred in the Kanpur Case.

Another English daily of Calcutta, *The Bengalee*, did not express any opinion. *The Times of India* (a British-owned newspaper) of Bombay reported the judgement without commenting on it. *The Englishman*, the British-owned Calcutta daily wrote an editorial attacking us.

After the dismissal of our appeal in the Allahabad High Court, the issue of the Kanpur Bolshevik Case came up before the "All-Party" Conference in Bombay on November 21, 1924. The conference was in session on November 21 and 22 under the chairmanship of Dinsha Manockjee Petit. Distinguished personalities like Mr. Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Das, Pundit Motilal Nehru, Mrs. Besant, etc., were present at the conference. A special item on the agenda was the Government's Bengal policy.

"Mr. Gandhi proposed the appointment of a representative committee to draw up a resolution dealing with the

Government's policy in Bengal. Mrs. Basant maintained that the existence of a dangerous revolutionary conspiracy in India had been proved and referred to the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy trial, urged the conference to repudiate the Third International." [The Times (London), November 22, 1942, p. 12, Col. 8 (Reuter)].

I do not know whether or not the All-Party Conference accepted what Mrs. Besant said, but it has been quoted in many places by foreign writers. Mrs Besant herself claimed in many places that she spoke for all the others.

### **Sripat Amrit Dange and Nalinibhusan Dasgupta Pray for Pardon**

I have already said that the four prisoners convicted in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case were transferred to different jails on July 7, 1924. We, however, knew nothing about our impending transfers to different jails on that day. A little after noon, a jail warder suddenly came and asked all the four of us to come to the office. When we asked him the reason, he said that orders for our transfer had come.

Before noon, Dange's friends (Mr Jog and others) had interviewed him. Mr. Jog and company has developed friendship with the jailor and his clerk, Muhammad Hafiz. Mr. Hafiz, I think, told Mr. Jog about the transfer, and Mr. Jog, possibly gave this information to Dange without our knowledge. Before leaving for the railway station, we had to wait for a few hours in the jail office. It was during this interval that Dange wrote his petition to the District Magistrate of Kanpur. The office room in Kanpur District jail was quite big. We did not evince any curiosity about what Dage was writing sitting in a corner of the room. His *fiance* was expected in Kanpur and we thought he was leaving a message. He must have handed over the paper to Mr. Hafiz at some opportune moment. Nalini did not sign it in our presence, for, in that case, we would have got suspicious and wanted to see it. It was Dange, as all others believe, who signed also for Nalini at that time, as there was no other way of keeping the thing secret. Nalini must have

consented to this arrangement. This paper, bearing the signatures of both Sripat Amrit Dange and Nalinibhusan Dasgupta, was their joint petition for pardon. It was addressed to the District Magistrate of Kanpur and dated July 7. A little before our departure for the station, Mr. Muhammad Hafiz rang up Mr Jog at 'Kamala Tower', Juggilal Kamalapat's Office. Mr Jog, Ganeshshankar Vidyarthi and certain others persons went to the railway station. We were completely unaware of the fact that Dange and Nalini had left Kanpur Jail after sending a prayer for pardon. We came to know of this nearly forty years later, in 1964 (from documents preserved in the National Archives of India.)

File No. 421—Poll (Home Deptt.)—1924

P.14

To

The District Magistrate, Cawnpore

Sir,

We, the undersigned, beg to inform you that we are willing to give an undertaking to Government not to commit any more offences, for which we are at present convicted and we shall be thankful to government if they will deign to consider our request favourably and release us as soon as possible, as we are undergoing suffering which we cannot sustain. We shall be personally thankful to you if you arrange with Government for our petition being granted.

We are,

District Jail.

Cawnpore

7th July 1924

Your Obdt. Servants.

Shripat Amrit Dange

Nalini Bhushan Dasgupta

This is the original petition in English. The two signatures therein were both written by Dange. If Nalini and Dange both had signed in our presence on a piece of paper, our suspicion would have been roused. Dange must have signed for Nalini with his consent. Nalini never said that the signature was not his. The ink on the letters 'Bh' in the signature is comparatively thick. Dange, I think, wrote 'Ku' after

Nalini, for Nalinikumar Dasgupta was also another of Nalini's name. His friend, Kiranbehari Roy, said in his evidence that Kumar was Nalini's second name. After writing 'Ku', Dange remembered that it was 'Bhusan' in the judgement. He then rubbed off 'Ku' and write 'Bh' over the letters. There are some who think that Dange had at first written 'Bu' by mistake and changed it to 'Bhu' later, and hence, the ink on 'Bhu' is thicker than on the other letters.

Anyhow, this is not Dange's only petition for pardon. There are more such letters written by him and Nalini. I will reproduce them one by one. I want to make one point clear here. When the Dange letters came to light in 1964, there was a debate over whether Dange's name was Shripad or Shripat. Two of Dange's friends, Renu Chakravarty and 'Ferishta' (probably her husband, Nikhilnath Chakravarty) argued that Dange always wrote 'Shripad', but as the name on the amnesty petition was 'Shripat', the petitions were forged. Going a few steps further, 'Ferishta' said that Nalini had forged the letters. And this was the same Nalini as could not write a postcard even without Abdul Halim's help. Taking the cue, Dange also said that he was a Brahmin and Brahmins always write Shripad, not Shripat.

There was no reason at all for this debate. But now I find that (as the Bengali saying goes that in searching for earth-worms we have dug up a snake). Numerous more documents have since been discovered from the Archives. The Police records show Dange's name as Sripat Amrit Dange. It was also Sripat Amrit Dange against whom the sanction for starting a case in Kanpur was granted by the Government of India. The accused in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case was Sripat Armit Dange, not Sripad Amrit Dange. Deposing from the dock, Dange, said,

"My name is Shripat Amrit Dange; my father's name is Amrit Raghunath Dange; I am by caste Brahman; 24 years of age.....

*Sd/- S. A. Dange*

*Sd/- H. Holme,  
Sessions Judge.*

Above examination (overleaf as well) was taken in my presence and hearing and the record contains a full and true account of Statement made by the accused.

Sd/- H. E. Holme,  
Sessions Judge  
3-5-1924''

This court record has been developed from the microfilm of the case records in the National Archives.

The debate about the name, I hope, ends here. It is now confirmed that the name of Dange who was accused in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case was Shripat Amrit Dange. Shaukat Usmani stated emphatically that his name was Shaukat Usmani not Mowla Buksh, and the prosecution accepted it and did not send for the register of students in Dungeer College in Bikaner to prove that Shaukat Uamani was really Mowla Buksh. What difference does a name make?

After his transfer to Gorakhpur District Jail, Nalini Dasgupta wrote a letter suing for pardon, also to the District Magistrate of Gorakhpur.

P.18

To

The District Magistrate,  
Gorakhpur

Sir,

I most humbly and respectfully beg to state that I have been convicted for four years R.I. on 20th May, 1924 under Section 121-A, I.P.C. from the Court of Sessions Judge at Cawnpore.

I regret very much what I have done, and I request you kindly to do your best for my release, and I promise that in future I will never take part in any kind of political movement, and I am ready to give any kind of assurance you may like.

I have the honour etc.

Sd/- Nalini Bhusan Das Gupta  
Prisoner

Gorakhpur Dt. Jail  
16-7-1924



Barely nineteen days after their conviction by the Sessions Court, Dange and Nalini sent the petition for pardon through the District Magistrate of Kanpur, "as we are undergoing suffering which we cannot sustain." On the 16th of the same month, Nalini individually sent another petition for pardon from Garakhpur District jail.

After waiting in vain in Sitapur District Jail for a reply to his appeal, Dange sent another petition, a pretty lengthy one, on July 28, 1924 to the Governor-General-in-Council, *Government after his release*. I am reproducing here the type-script of the application written by him.

C/o The Superintendent  
District Jail  
Sitapur (U.P. of A.O.)

From

Shripat Armit Dange,

Prisoner, (4 years R. I. under Sec. 121-A I.P.C. in the  
Bolshevik Conspiracy Case of Cawnpore)

To

His Excellency

The Governor-General-in-Council.

Your Excellency,

I am one of the four in the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case of Cawnpore. I beg to put forward for Your Excellency's consideration a prayer for the remission of my sentence for following reasons.

In submitting my prayer I have to refer to certain facts, which Your Excellency may not be cognisant of; but Your Excellency can verify their truth by referring to Col. C. Kaye, Director, Central Intelligence Bureau or to the person mentioned hereinafter.

When the above-referred case was proceeding in the Lower Court, Mr Ross Alston, that learned Counsel for prosecution happened to have a side talk with me, during the course of which he remarked, "Government is not very

particular about the punishment of the individual accused. The case is instituted only to prove to a doubting public the truth of Government's statements, made from time to time as to the existence of Bolshevik Conspiracy in India.' I think the learned Counsel is not likely to have misrepresented Your Excellency's policy as he was in too close touch with Government officials to have mistaken Government's intentions. The position of Your Excellency's Government has been vindicated by the verdict of the Court, Your Excellency may not mind remitting my sentence and granting my prayer.

I might also refer to another incident. Exactly one year back the Deputy Commissiner of Police of Bombay, Mr Stewart, was having a conversation with me, in his office, regarding my relations with M.N.Roy and an anticipated visit to me of certain persons from abroad. During the course of the conversation the Honourable officer let drop a hint, in the following words, the full import of which I failed to catch at that moment. Mr Stewart said, "you hold an exceptionally influential position in certain circles here and abroad. Government would be glad if this position would be of some use to them." I think, I still hold that position. Rather it has been enhanced by the prosecution. If Your Excellency is pleased to think that I should use that position for the good of Your Excellency's Government and the country, I should be glad to do so, if I am given the opportunity by Your Excellency granting my prayer for release.

I am given the punishment of four years' rigorous imprisonment in order that those years may bring a salutary change in my attitude towards the King Emperor's sovereignty in India. I beg to intorm Your Excellency that those years are unnecessary, as I have never been positively disloyal towards His Majesty in my writing or speeches nor do I intend to be so in future.

Hoping this respectful undertaking will satisfy and move Your Excellency to grant my prayer and awaiting anxiously a reply.

Written this day  
28th July, 1924.

I beg to remain,  
Your Excellency's  
Most Obedient Servant,  
Shripat Amrit Dange.

Forwarded through the Superintendent, District Jail,  
Sitapur (U.P).

Endorsement No. 1048, dated Sitapur Jail the 31.7.24

Submitted in original to the Inspector General of Prisons,  
U P disposal.

Sd/- Illegible,  
Major, I. M. D.  
Supdt., Jail, Sitapur.

In pursuance of his prayer for release on the undertaking to turn an informer, sent by him to the Governor-General-in-Council on July 28, 1924, (I cannot follow why he mentioned the date as July 26 in his subsequent appeal), Dange sent another application on November 16, 1924.

From Home Deptt.

Political File No. 278/75 of 1925 page 2 (Corres.).

From

Shripat Amrit Dange, Esq. District Jail, Sitapur  
(U.P)

To

His Excellency, Governor-General-in-Council,  
Your Excellency,

Pending my appeal before the Hon'ble High Court, Your Excellency's Government were not prepared to take into consideration my petition, dated 26th (?) July, 1924 re: remission of my sentence, in what is known as the Bolshevik Conspiracy Cse of Cawnpore. The decision of the Government was conveyed to me in their communication No. 5718/IV-1376 D/Nainital 11.10.24, forwarded with the endorsement No 22594/E 37 of 24D/21.10.24 of the Inspector General of Police, U.P.

My appeal having now been dismissed, I beg to bring the same petition to Your Excellency's notice for consideration and await favour.

16th November,  
1924

I beg to remain,  
Your Obedient Servant,  
Shripat Amrit Dange

This is just a reminder of Dange's earlier petition. It makes no fresh prayer. On October 21, 1924, Dange had been informed through the Inspector-General of Police, United Provinces (Dange had offered to turn informer for the police) that his petition to the Governor-General would not be considered till the disposal of his appeal by the High Court. The appeal was dismissed on November 10, and on November 16 Dange sent a reminder to the Governor-General that his appeal having been dismissed, his petition might be kindly considered.

If Dange had been released then and there, as he had stated in his petition, his political career would have ended once for all. He could never have fulfilled the secret undertaking to act as an informer for the Home Department of the Government of India in exchange of his release. Only by retaining his position of influence in politics, he could have supplied information secretly to the Government of India. The Home Department of the Government of India did not release him at that time with the consideration that he could be of use in future. Although Col. Kaye had retired then and been succeeded by David Petrie, he helped in the matter of the appeal arising from the Kanpur Case. Petrie said that he could not agree to Dange's immediate release, because people might think that if by suing for pardon one could get oneself released forthwith, it was better to go to jail for some actual offence: but if Dange sued for pardon after serving his sentence for two years, he would be the first to recommend his release. From the documents of the Home Department of the Government of India which I read later in connection with the Dange affairs, I have learnt also that some of the officers in the department were of the opinion that Dange should be granted frequent

remissions so that he could be released quickly. Dange was given remissions for a fairly long period-one year.

### **About Nalini Gupta Again**

Men of the Intelligence Branch of Bengal had met Nalini Gupta in Gorakhpur District Jail and it was at their request that Nalini was transferred from Gorakhpur District Jail to Khulna District Jail in Bengal. The letter I am reproducing below will make the point clear.

Intelligence Branch, C.I.D.  
13 Elysium Row  
Calcutta, 27 th June 1925  
No. 6673

### **SECRET**

From

J. E. Armstrong, Esq., O.B.E. Deputy Inspector-General  
of Police, Intelligence Branch, C.I.D., Bengal

To

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Sir,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of moving the Government of India to suspend the sentence of imprisonment which Convict Nalini Bhusan Gupta is at present undergoing.

This man, Nalini, was convicted and sentenced in May 1924 to four years' R.I. in connection with the Cawnpore (Bolshevik) Conspiracy Case. At our request he was transferred from the Gorakhpur Jail to the Khulna Jail at the end of 1924 and thereafter to the Alipore Central Jail, as it was found that he was suffering from appendix trouble and gall stones and that an operation would have to be performed. He was admitted into the Prince of Wales Hospital for treatment in December last and has only just returned to the Alipore Central Jail.

In spite of two operations his condition is distinctly bad and he is too weak and emaciated to stand. Major Sandes, the Superintendent of the Medical College, writes as follows:

"I myself have personally seen the case and it strikes one as that of a man being seriously but not at the moment dangerously ill. His mental condition is one of marked depression, and release undoubtedly would improve the latter condition." On the 10th June, Major Sandes again wrote:

"He (Colonel Connor, the Surgeon in charge of Nalini's case) is definitely of opinion that the convict is not progressing and that he is likely to go steadily downhill. His mental outlook has an important bearing on his malady. If it is within the bounds of possibility to give him his liberty, even for a time, it might do much towards saving his life. In this opinion I concur."

Prior to his conviction Nalini made a statement to the police, but subsequently stated that through fear he had not disclosed all he knew. Since his conviction he has been interviewed on several occasions and has readily given information within his knowledge. It has not, however, been possible to obtain from him a detailed statement owing to his state of health.

In his present condition, if set at liberty, he is physically incapable of mischief and in view of the medical opinion quoted above that such a course may be the means of saving his life, I recommend that his sentence be temporarily suspended and that he be handed over to some relative. If this step is approved his relatives will be communicated with and suitable arrangements made.

I have etc.,  
Sd/- J. E. Armstrong,  
Deputy Inspector General of  
Police, I. B.

I submit these papers, for Home Member's information. As D.I.B's letter shows there was no doubt that the man should be released and I therefore telegraphed in reply to Bengal

Government agreeing to release. I will show to H.E. to-morrow if H. M. returns the papers.

Sd/- (Illegible)

30. 6. 25

I have shown H. E. Post Copy of telegram should be sent by mail to Bengal.

Sd/- (Illegible)

1. 7. 25

According to Mr. Armstrong. Nalini had an operation for appendicitis and gall stones in 1924-25. He is wrong, I think. Nalini had an operation for appendicitis in the Colombo Medical College Hospital in 1921. I heard nothing about gallstone. It is true that Nalini was operated upon twice at the Prince of Wales Hospital of the Calcutta Medical College. Dr Ramchandra Adhikari, the eminent tuberculosis specialist of Calcutta, was then a house surgeon in the Prince of Wales Hospital (only operations are performed here) in 1926, I asked him about Nalini's actual ailment. He explained to me that Nalini was actually suffering from intestinal tuberculosis. Anyway, Nalini was seriously ill and underwent operations twice.

About Nalini, plenty of documents of which I knew nothing previously are now available. Of these, we have read the statement he gave in 1924 against Amritalal Hazra, accused in the Rajabazar Bomb Case (Nalini left for England after giving this statement) and the statements he gave day after day—in the manner of Scheherazade of the *Arabian Nights*—after his arrest towards the end of 1923. All these are preserved in the Archives of the Government of India. Mr. Armstrong has referred to the statements he gave after his conviction. We have not got them yet. But the police, it seems, asked him about Gopen in August, 1924. Nalini then told the police that a revolutionary named Subodh had been brought to him and he had sent him to M. N. Roy with a letter.\* On the whole, Nalini was a man with the temperament of a vagabond. He

\* Col C. Kaye : Communism in India, p. 134.

was a political upstart. In 1926-27, when he was with us at 37 Harrison Road, he caused us no end of trouble. His factionalism at that time severely taxed our patience. Yet when the propaganda that he was a police agent was being carried on by the Congress office and on behalf of the newspaper, *Forward*, we fought against it for him.

When, in 1927, he was preparing to go back again to Germany, the period of the validity of the passport he had renewed at Marseilles had expired. He did not then tell me whether or not he had been able to get his passport renewed. But I was getting information that he was seeing people here and there. I came to know that he had met at least Charles Tegart, the Police Commissioner of Calcutta. This was how I came to know of this. One day when Nalini was having an interview with Mr. Tegart in the Lalbazar Police Office, another interview slip, seeking interview, was received from Atulkrishna Ghose, a fellow-worker of M. N. Roy's and a leader of Jatin Mokhopdhyaya's party. He had gone there to arrange certain things for his younger brother, Amarkrishna. Mr Tagart sent for Atulkrishan with Nalini sitting in front of him. Even before entering the office, Atulkrishna Ghose could hear Tegart shouting very loudly. He was telling Nalini, "What are you after? Do you think Muzaffar will become a Lenin and you a Trotsky? That is impossible." Tegart, it seemed to me, was play acting. Tegart, I have heard, was an internationally known police officer. Yet he did not know that, in 1927, Trotsky was under heavy criticism in the Soviet Union. I came to know of this interview on the next day from Atulkrishna Ghose. But Nalini did not disclose anything about it to me. Why did he go to Tegart? It was quite possible for him to go for a passport, because, in those days, the Police Commissioner of Calcutta and even a District Magistrate could issue international passport. Before leaving India, Nalini had been avoiding me. At last he came to me one day, because if he left without meeting me, he would find himself in difficulty in Bombay. He told me that he had neither money nor a passport. I asked him why he did not meet Tegart about



the passport. Nalini said that he had met Tegart but without any success. But, possibly, he got the passport; possibly he entered into some deeper understanding with Tegart. Nalini was a deep one. By the way, I told Nalini also about the money. The police had taken away from Kiranbehari Roy the amount of twenty-five pounds sent for Nalini. The money had been deposited in the Kanpur Court during our trial, and now, at long last, Nalini authorised a lawyer in Kanpur to withdraw the amount. The money was due and I asked Nalini to stay a few days more to receive it, but he did not agree.

I strongly believe that Nalini had with him passport given by Tegart. Yet, after reaching Bombay, he wanted a passport and comrade Shantaram Mirajkar arranged to get him one.

I do not want to say anything more about Nalini. When he went back to Europe in 1927, he went back, I am convinced, as a British agent. He used to run a restaurant in Germany. The restaurant was a rendezvous for Indians, where everything was discussed. Nalini could very easily report on the Indians to the British Government. He was running his restaurant in Berlin even after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 and till the declaration of war. No foreigner having the slightest association of Communism about him was allowed by Hitler to stay in Germany. Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and others ran away from Germany. Soumyendranath Tagore was put under arrest by Hitler but he was spared, I have heard, on that occasion because he was the grandson of Rabindranath Tagore's eldest brother. Although Nalini was not really a communist, he had plenty of association with Communism. He had visited Moscow quite a number of times and had been an accused in a 'Bolshevik Conspiracy Case' in India. How could Nalini, with this background, run his restaurant even after Hitler's seizure of power?

Among governments of different countries there exists a high-level arrangement under which the agent of one country is allowed to remain in another. Nalini, for instance, was allowed to remain in Berlin, and he used to send reports to the British Government on Indian residents in Berlin. Likewise,

under this arrangement, there was Hitler's agent also in London, who sent reports to Germany on the German residents in London. Nalini had to return to India after the outbreak of war, but he did not contact me after his return. He forbade Sunil, his youngest nephew (son of his first cousin), to go to Abdul Halim. Nalini served also for some time in the Delhi office of Thomas Cook. How did he secure this appointment?

I will conclude Nalini's account here. Although we did not at all know, that Nalini was making one statement after another to the police, I should have suspected him till 1927. In 1927, I suffered much ill-treatment at his hands. I wrote a letter abroad in his favour. When, after his return from Germany in 1928, Dr. Gangadhar Adhikari came to Calcutta, he told me that Nalini was regarded as a British spy by many abroad and he asked my opinion of him. I told him that I had not found any proof of his being a spy. Dr. Adhikari then asked me to sent this information to Germany, which I did. But I repent now of having done so. It is not that I did not harbour any suspicion about Nalini in my mind. On the other hand, it is as much as a fact that I did not then possess the proofs that I have now of his being spy. I had suspicions about him in my mind. At least, I could have written as much. Although I found his factionalism extremely exasperating, I displayed weakness about him. The very thought of this fills me with repentance.

### **I am Released Prematurely**

For the whole of 1922 and till the middle of 1923, I passed through severe physical stress and strain, which, I am convinced, was the cause of my tuberculosis. In 1923-1924, Captain B. G. Malia, I.M.S., Superintendent, Dacca Central Jail, had diagnosed my illness and got me removed from the 'Six Cells' to a room with many doors. But he did not let me know of my illness. But once when I met him outside jail, he told me that he had diagnosed my illness in Dacca Central Jail.

For one night, in July, 1924, I was kept confined alone

in a small building in Rae-Bareilly Jail. There was only one convict with me. The warder was somewhere near by. I had a slight fit of cough, and a lot of blood came out of my mouth. There being no spittoon, I spat out the entire blood on the floor. As in all other jails in the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) the floor of this jail was of mud. In the morning, the doctor, a sub-assistant surgeon, came and scraped away everything about the floor. Later in the morning, Dr. D. K. Mukherji, the Superintendent came. He was also the Civil Surgeon of the district of Rae-Bareilly. My gum was very bad with pyorrhoea. The doctor said that the blood was from the gum. I had nothing more to do on my part, but Dr. Mukherji enquired about me and from time to time examined me. I could know nothing about what reports he was sending in the meanwhile. He came one day and told me that I would be sent at government expense to the District Jail in Almora, a hill station, which people found too expensive to visit, and he advised me to take as much nourishment as possible.

On the day of my arrival in Almora, the entry 'incipient tuberculosis' was made for the first time in my history ticket. Almora Jail was situated on a high hill. I climbed up to that height supported by the sepoys. The morning after my arrival in Almora Jail, a letter came from the Government of India ordering my unconditional release on medical grounds. As far as I can recollect, the date was September 12, 1925.

I had no previous knowledge of what notes were exchanged about me in Government circles. The National Archives having been opened recently to the general public, I have found some documents. They are reproduced below:

JAIL FORM NO. 61

(To be submitted in Duplicate)

Statement of [?] prisoner recommended for release on account of bodily infirmity, from the District Jail at Rae-Bareilly.

1. Name of Prisoner—Muzaffar Ahmad No. 6575 (Bolshevik Prisoner).

2. Sex—Male, Age 31 years.
3. Caste and profession—Bengali (Musalman) Journalis.
4. Crime-121-A I.P.C.
5. Sentence and date—4 years R.I. on 20.5.1924.
6. By what authority passed—Sessions Judge Cawnpore.
7. Unexpired period—2 years 9 months 12 days.
8. Nature of complaint in consequence of which release is recommended, and a brief history of the disease—Incipient Tuberculosis.

Since his admission into the jail on 5. 7. 1924\* he has been slowly losing health and for the last two months the decline has been rather rapid. For the last fortnight he has been getting an irregular type of fever: his weight when he came in was 95 lbs\*\* which had gone down to 81 lbs. and he has been reduced to bone and skin. I am of opinion that he has been suffering from Incipient Tuberculosis.

9. Declaration of the Surgeon: certified that-

- (a) the disease is likely to prove fatal if the prisoner remains in prison;
- (b) there is a reasonable chance of recovery if the prisoner is released;
- (c) the disease has not been produced or aggravated by any wilful act on the part of the prisoner.

*Sd/-* D. K. Mukherji.

Officer in Medical Charge of Jail.

10. Opinon and remarks by Officer in Charge of Jail

(No. 1153)

Dated 7th August, 1925.

Release recommended and submitted to the Inspector General of Prisons, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, for necessary action.

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\* Rae-Bareli Jail on 8th July, 1924, (M.A.)

\*\* My weight was 112 lbs. when I was admitted into Kanpur Jail (M.A.)

The Medical Officer recommends the release and certifies to conditions (a), (b) and (c).

I Yes, he has relatives to look after him if released.

*Sd/-* D. K. Mukherji,  
Superintendent of Jail.

II Remarks and recommendation by Inspector General of Prisons.

No. 18681/E38

Dated Lucknow, 8.8. 1925.

Reference this office D. O. No. 2518/31. 7. 25.

Submitted to the Deputy Secretary to Government, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Judicial (Criminal) Department, with the remark that the prisoner may be released, his weight has fallen and the Superintendent reports that he is losing health rapidly.

*Sd/-* Illegible  
Lt. Col. I.M.S.

Offg. Inspector General of Prisons,  
United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

No. 5097

From

J. R. W. Bennett, Esqr., I.C.S.  
Deputy Secretary to the Government  
United Provinces.

To

The Secretary to the Government of India  
Home Department (Political).

Dated Nainital, August 31, 1925.

Subject: Proposed release on medical grounds of Prisoner  
Muzaffar Ahmad of the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case.

Judicial (Criminal) Department.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the correspondence ending with the Home Department letter No. D.-1613/25-Poll., dated July 13, 1925, and to forward for the orders of the Government of India the roll of prisoner Muzaffar Ahmad No. 6575 convicted in the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case who is at present confined at the District Jail at Rae-Bareilly.

2. It will be observed that the prisoner is suffering from incipient tuberculosis and has been slowly losing weight since his admission into the Rae-Bareilly Jail on July 5.\* 1924. During the last two months his decline is reported to have been rather rapid. His weight which on admission was 95 lbs. is now only 81 lbs. and he has lately been suffering from irregular attacks of fever.
3. As consumption of this type is often fatal and the patient may sink rapidly the Governor in Council recommends that the Government of India may be moved to sanction the release of Muzaffar Ahmad as early as possible. Pending the receipt of the orders of the Government of India the Governor in Council has directed the transfer of the prisoner from the Rae-Bareilly to the Almora District Jail.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

*Sd/-* J. R. W. Bennett,

Deputy Secretary.

Telegram/Express.

\* July 8, 1925 (M.A.)

No. 1-278/25.

Political Branch: Dated 5th September, 1925.

To

UPAO NAINITAL

Your letter 5097, dated 31st August, Government of India agree to release Muzaffar Ahmad.

I should like the Home Department to see Ps/2, 7 and 10 of the file in regard to the recent activities of Muzaffar Ahmad, one of the convicts in the Cawnpore conspiracy Case, who was released last year on medical grounds of ill-health.

From the U.P. letter (P.U.C.) it appears that Muzaffar Ahmad was released unconditionally, and presumably therefore, he violated no undertaking by again taking a prominent part in Communist activities. At the same time, the fact that a man like Muzaffar Ahmad can with impunity resume his old way almost immediately on the top of his release cannot but leave an unfrotunate impression on the public mind. The judgment in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case-especially that of the Allahabad High Court—was of the greatest service to the Government in that it convinced those members of the public who were open to conviction of the reality and of the potential danger of Bolshevik intrigues in India. Now, however, they see that Muzaffar Ahmad is again out of the jail, and although it was only a short time ago that he was sentenced, is again openly flaunting himself as an active Communist. Under these circumstances, the public can hardly be blamed if they make up their minds that the Government do not take a serious view of activities of the kind that earned Muzaffar Ahmad and his fellow plotters their punishment. If any such impression were to arise, it would be in every way unfortunate. If it is a fact that Muzaffar Ahmad was released absolutely unconditionally, his speedy return to his old courses points the moral that men of his kind should never be released except on strictest conditions of continued good behaviour. If Muzaffar Ahmad is sufficiently restored to health to be able to do what he is reported to be doing, proper place

for him is in jail, and it is unfortunate that the conditions of this release preclude us from sending him back there.

*Sd/- D. Petrie*

20. 1. 26

Let me see our papers about Muzaffar Ahmad's release.

*Sd/- J. Crerar*

21. 1. 26

In their letter dated the 31st August, 1925 the U.P. Government recommended the release of Muzaffar Ahmad in view of the state of his health caused by incipient tuberculosis and Government of India merely conveyed by telegram their sanction to the proposal.

*Sd/- J. Mc.D.*

22. 1. 26

D. I. B. should see the pp. I regret they were not shown to him at the time. In such cases in future the alternative of conditional suspension or remission should be examined. The difficulty of course is that the conditions must under the law be accepted by the prisoner. In the present case there was little change of this and the medical reports indicated that he should be released at once.

*Sd/- J. Crerar*

25. 1. 26

As a matter of fact, I was shown the Home Department papers about the actual release of Muzaffar Ahmad, but I was not aware whether it was conditional or unconditional. It is of course, correct that any condition of release must be accepted by the prisoner, but I would strongly recommend that in such future cases the alternative of conditional suspension or remission be examined, as is proposed in Secretary's note. I fancy we should have more acceptance than refusals.

In this particular case Muzaffar Ahmad has made us look rather foolish. What is more, he seems to be back in the movement again "With both feet."

*Sd/- D. Petrie*

27.1.26



What did David Petrie want? Did he want me to perish after my release? I was unable to oblige him. A man is born only once. Who, therefore, does not want to live. Even today, on the wrong side of eighty, I have not lost my desire to live. Sir David Petrie perhaps is dead.

After my release from jail, I stayed in Almora for more than three months. There was some improvement in my health. From Almora I returned to Calcutta on January 2, 1926, via Dehra Dun (where I went to see Usmani) and Kanpur and laid my bed straight on the floor of the office of the Workers' and Peasants' Party (then called the Labour-Swaraj Party) on the second storey of the building at 37 Harrison Road. On January 20, David Petrie, submitted a report about my getting back into the movement "With both feet" to Mr Crerar, Home Secretary to the Government of India. Reading these old files now, I am led to wonder what I might have done in the course of two weeks to upset Petrie so much. I wanted to see this file, but my friends have not been able to trace it. I fell ill frequently in 1926. Besides, by having me under surveillance, Mr Petrie and company entirely poisoned my political life. His hired agent, Janaki-prasad Bagerhatta, even became Secretary of the Communist Party of India. He was found out by us afterwards. I heard recently that he had died.

## The Peshwar Conspiracy Cases (1921-1924)\*

Between 1921 and 1924 there were four successive Communist Conspiracy Cases in Peshawar. Another Conspiracy Case was held in 1927. All these cases were launched under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. It was in Peshawar that the conspiracy cases against the Communists began. Everybody knows that Peshawar at that time was Indian territory.

Before anything is said about these cases, it is necessary to describe briefly something of their background. In the last century or at the beginning of the present one in India those who ventured to bring about a political revolution in the country tried to proceed towards their goal along the path of religious practice. Hence, every believer who ventured on the path of revolution sought to establish the hegemony of his own faith. The Muslim *Wahabis* revolted against the rule of the Sikhs and the British. They wanted the restoration of the Muslim rule. They called their war the *Jihad*, i.e. holy war. The Namadhari Sikhs of the Punjab revolted against the British with the cry "The Khalsas, and none else, shall rule." Bankimchandra's *Anandamath*, a work filled with hatred against the Muslims, provided inspiration to the terrorist revolutionaries of Bengal. Their philosophy of revolution was the philosophy of *Anandamath*. Chapekar Brothers of Poona made it their mission to remove the obstacles to the Hindu religion. They formed a revolutionary organization with the name

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\* Excerpts from : Muzaffar Ahmad's Memoirs : "Myself and the Communist Party of India", pages 152-197

*'Society for the removal of obstacles to the Hindu Religion.'* They Killed British officials also. Aurobindo Ghosh sought to attain revolutionary success through the practice of religion by founding the '*Bhawani Mandir*' (Temple of Bhawani). Religious inspiration was not lacking also in the preparations for the anti-British revolution in our country. As for the followers of Islam, they did not live within the borders of India only. Among them, there was a sense of international brotherhood. The basis of this, of course, was not class : it was religion.

### **The Fugitive Students of Lahore**

In February, 1915, fifteen revolutionary Muslim students from different colleges in Lahore crossed the north-western frontier of India and went first into the territories of the independent tribes ; from there they went to Kabul. World War I was in progress then, and the frontiers of our country, particularly the north-western frontier, were strongly fortified. In spite of this, however, the revolutionary students succeeded in crossing the frontier. They were not the only ones to cross the frontier. Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi also crossed the frontier. Whether he preceded the students or followed them is not known to me. It should however be mentioned here that it was Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi who instilled revolutionary inspiration to the students of Lahore to leave the country. He might have done this himself or through his favourite student, Khwaja Abdul Hai. Khwaja Sahib was a revolutionary, although, to all appearance, he pursued the vocations of journalism and teaching.

The fifteen students, referred above, came to be known later as '*fugitive*' students or '*mujahid*' students. The word '*jihad*' means holy war. Those who fight holy wars are called *mujahids*. The mission of the fugitive students was to make war against British rule, across the frontier, if possible; if not, by fighting on the side of Turkey. The Turks were already waging war upon the British. Moreover, the Sultan of Turkey was the Khalifa of the entire Muslim world. But the students along

with Maulavi Obeidullah were taken prisoners as soon as they reached Kabul. They were put not in chains exactly but kept under surveillance.

During World War I Germany and Turkey sent a 'mission' with the object of discussing with the Afghan Government matters connected with India. Raja Mahendra Pratap and Maulavi Barkatullah were members of this mission. The Turko-German mission reached Kabul on October 2, 1915. From Mahendra Pratap's autobiography we come to know that during their talks with Amir Habibullah Khan he told the Amir about Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi and the fugitive students of Lahore were being kept under surveillance. Two Sikhs had been put in chains and thrown into prison. They had been accused in connection with some bomb case in India and somehow escaped to Afghanistan. Raja Mahendra Pratap brought their case also to the knowledge of the Amir. The Amir immediately ordered that Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi and the students be released and made state guests. The two Sikh prisoners also were released.

I am giving the names of some of the fifteen fugitive students from different colleges in Lahore :

- (1) Khushi Muhammad
- (2) Abdul Hamid
- (3) Zafar Hassan
- (4) Allah Nawaz
- (5) Abdul Bari
- (6) Muhammad Abdullah
- (7) Abdur Rahman
- (8) Abdur Rashid
- (9) Rahamat Ali
- (10) Abdul Majid (Kohat)

I have not been able to ascertain the names of the remaining five students. I have gathered that the students engaged themselves not in holy war abroad, but in waging war upon British imperialism.

### **Formation of A Provisional Indian Government in Kabul**

A provisional Indian Government was formed in Kabul on December, 1, 1915, with Raja Mahendra Pratap as President and Maulavi Barkatullah as Prime Minister. Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi was appointed its Home Minister. The fugitive students of Lahore also joined this provisional government in various capacities. In his *My Life Story of Fifty-Five Years* Mahendra Pratap writes of having done something that seems very strange to us, although he describes it as an original idea. As President of the Provisional Indian Government he sent to the Tsar of Russia a letter inscribed on a thick sheet of gold. Maulavi Barkatullah and Maulavi Obeidullah helped him in drafting this letter. It will be no news to say that in the letter the Tsar was solicited to help in the winning of Indian Independence. But Russia was Britain's ally in the war, while Raja Mahendra Pratap and his friends were bound by an agreement with Germany. Mahendra Pratap sent this letter against the desire of Dr. Von Hentig of the German Mission. As it was not possible to send the letter to St. Petersburg, the Tsarist capital, in the midst of a war, it was sent to the Tsar's Governor-General in Tashkent. Muhammad Ali & Shamser Singh carried the letter. Muhammad Ali was Khushi Muhammad, the fugitive student from Lahore Medical College, and Shamser Singh was the *alias* of Dr. Mathura Singh. Although the letter had cost so much in gold, no satisfactory reply was received ; it was, however, most fortunate that the bearers of the letter—both of them— could return alive to Kabul. But Mahendra Pratap did not stop at this. He sent two messengers again with a letter addressed to the Tsar's Governor-General in Tashkent. The messengers never came back to Kabul. They were arrested by the Tsarist Government and turned over to the British force occupying Iran, where they were shot dead. In his book Mahendra Pratap has recorded only the fact of sending the letter inscribed on a sheet of gold. As for the other items of information, I have gathered them from Dr.

Devendra Kaushik's article *Indian Revolutionaries in Soviet Asia* (Link, New Delhi, January 26, 1966).

Among the fugitive students of Lahore, Allah Nawaz probably became an Afghan citizen. He was appointed Afghanistan's Minister in Berlin. In his book Mahendra Pratap writes, "Mr. Allah Nawaz is Afghanistan's Minister in Berlin." I do not know exactly how many of the fugitive students joined the Communist movement. Abdul Hamid of Lahore Medical College was admitted to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East and studied there. In 1922 he was returning along with others to India but could not proceed farther than the Pamir. It is learnt from old police reports that he returned to India in 1926 and was also prosecuted in Peshawar. He was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment but on appeal the sentence was set aside by the higher court. He did not return perhaps to politics afterwards or he might have pursued some safe kind of politics. We did not hear of him again. Among the fugitive students, Khushi Muhammad and Rahamat Ali earned much prominence in the Communist movement abroad. I shall introduce them briefly here.

### About Muhammad Ali

In police records Khushi Muhammad has many *aliases*, e.g. Muhammad Ali, Sipassi, Ibrahim and Dr. Nayar. His home was in Nawanshahr, a town in the district of Jullundur in the Punjab. His father's name was Jan Muhammad. I shall use the most widely known of Khushi Muhammad's names—Muhammad Ali. He passed the F.Sc. Examination of the Punjab University from Lahore Government College and entered Lahore Medical College. While studying there, he left India along with fourteen other students in February, 1915. I have already said that they were described as 'fugitive' and 'mujahid' students in the police reports. In World War I Britain was Russia's ally. It was, therefore, a most adventurist step to invite the Tsar of Russia, Britain's ally, to fight the British and send Muhammad Ali and Shamser Singh (Dr.

Mathura Singh) on this mission exposing them to risks at every step. Still Muhamhad Ali and Shamser Singh proceeded with courage on this mission. In 1919, at the time of the Third Afghan War, Muhamhad Ali was found carrying on anti-British propaganda in the territories of the independent tribes on the Indian frontier. There is no doubt also that he turned towards Communism after the October Revolution of 1917, but the exact time of this development is not known to me.

From Afghanistan to the whole of Western Europe Muhammad Ali went everywhere on missions of the Communist Party of India and the Communist International. Muhammad Ali was one of the three members constituting the Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India, which had its headquarters in Paris. The other two members were Manabendranath Roy and Clemens Palme Dutt. As Muhammad Ali stayed at the headquarters, it was mainly he who directed the work of the Foreign Bureau.

Muhammad Ali made many attempts to return to India to do secret organizational work but he failed completely. He managed to reach Pondicherry by a French Ship in 1924. But the French Government made his stay there extremely difficult. The police kept him surrounded day and night in such a way that all his efforts to enter India failed. He had to sail for Antwerp by the next ship under orders from the French Government. Amanullah's Afghan Government expelled him from Afghanistan along with Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi and many others. After that, he worked at the headquarters of the Communist International and stayed in Western Europe most of the time on party work. I have already mentioned that he stayed in Paris as a member of the Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India. When Hitler's army occupied Paris, Muhammad Ali was there. There were in Paris at the time some faint-hearted Indians, who saved their own skins by becoming overnight propagandists for Hitler. But Muhammad Ali absolutely refused to become Hitler's propagandist and was consequently shot dead by Hitler's soldiers. This news

appeared in Indian newspapers at the time. It attracted my attention particularly, because I knew about Muhammad Ali. In another town of India it attracted the attention of Ajodhya-prasad also, who knew Muhammad Ali personally. Muhammad Ali had a Rumanian wife, who bore him a daughter. We have not been able to know whither they went. It is strange that Clemens Palme Dutt, a comrade of Muhammad Alis does not possess any information about him.

### **Rahamat Ali *alias* Zakaria**

Among the fugitive students, Rahamat Ali earned prominence in the Communist movement second only to that earned by Muhammad Ali. In the police reports his name appears as Rahamat Ali *alias* Zakariah *alias* Ibrahim Yahiya *alias* Goorlack, etc. To our comrades abroad Rahamat Ali was well known particularly as Zakaria. His home was in the district of Gujranwalla in the Punjab.

Zakaria was also a member of the Provisional Indian Government formed in Kabul and also one of those who were expelled from Afghanistan by Amanullah. I do not know when he first turned towards Communism, but, according to information gathered by Dr. Devendra Kaushik from old Soviet journals, which he studied for his article in *Link*, Zakaria addressed the Third Congress of the Turkestan Communist Party, held in Tashkent on 9 June, 1919, and his speech was greeted by the delegates with the slogan 'Long Live India'. This happened a year before Manabendranath Roy's first visit to Moscow. Zakaria was certainly not present in Tashkent when, on Roy's initiative, the Communist Party of India was formed there. Had he been there, he would have been, like Muhammad Ali, one of the founder-members of the Party. However, like Muhammad Ali, he had declared himself a Communist much earlier. In 1923 Zakaria stayed at different places in Iran in connection with the work of the Communist Party of India. In December of that year he was found working in the Eastern Section of the Communist International. In Berlin also he was engaged in doing work for our Party. I do



not clearly know when, subsequently, he got into Sorbonne University and studied there. But sometime in early 1930s he was conferred with a Doctorate of Sorbonne University. His thesis the *Hindu-Muslim Problems through Marxist Eyes* has been published as a book in French.

If he is living, Dr Rahamat Ali *alias* Zakaria would now (1968) be sixty-eight or sixty-nine years of age. S. A. Dange wrote to me in a letter that Dr. Rahamat Ali had met him in a hotel in Paris in 1946 and had requested him to visit his place and meet his children. Dange wrote further that he gave some pecuniary help to Dr. Rahamat Ali but that was not enough for his needs—which means that Dr. Rahamat Ali was in an extremely bad situation in 1946. We have no information about what he was doing or where he was staying in France under Fascist occupation. We do not also know whether he joined the Communist Party of France or not.

### **Hijrat and Muhajirs**

*Declaration of independece for Afghanistan—First Muhajirs in Kabul.*

The Hijrat movement originated from the Khilafat movement. During World War I the Prime Minister of Britain earnestly sought help from the Indian Muslims. He, therefore, made a pledge to them.

The pledges given by Llyod George declared unequivocally in these words : “Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race.” (*The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 139). The Muslims, however, were asking for the entire Arabian peninsula. Led by Maulana Muhammad Ali, editor of *Comrade*, a Khilafat deputation went to London in the beginning of March, 1920. But Lloyd George did not fulfil his pledge. In April, 1920, as soon as the news reached India, a powerful Hijrat movement broke out. The Khilafat deputation was still in London.

### **Declaration of Independence for Afghanistan**

*Hijrat* is an Arabic word and means going into self-exile to

escape persecution. The self-exiled person is called a *muhajir*. The plural of *muhajir* is *muhajirin*. As these words are connected with a special event, their spelling and pronunciation should be remembered. I do not think it is a very difficult thing to remember them. It is, therefore, strange that even a man like Manabendranath Roy should write *muhajir* as *mujahir*. The breach of pledge by the British Prime Minister gave rise immediately to the campaign that India was no longer a fit country for the Muslims to live in, and, the Muslims, therefore, should leave the country. At this time Badshah Amanullah Khan with all the prestige of his office made the announcement that he would accommodate the Indian muhajirs in Afghanistan. He had previously been a British pensioner. The Soviet Government in Russia was the first to accept Afghanistan as a fully independent country. The Third Anglo-Afghan War broke out in April-May, 1919. Although, at the request of Afghanistan armistice had been declared on May 14, 1919. Afghanistan was recognised as a fully independent state by the British in the peace treaty signed by them on August 8, 1919, at Rawalpindi. The British also agreed not to interfere in any way in the foreign policy of Afghanistan. The treaty was ratified finally on November 22, 1921 at Mussoorie.

### **First Muhajirs in Kabul**

The exodus of the Muslims started in April, 1920. Most of those who sold their lands, estates, houses and properties and left the country were the Muslims of Sind and North-West Frontier Province. Next to them in number came the Muslims of the Punjab; a small number came from other provinces too. In his *History of the Indian National Congress* (Vol. 1, p. 199) Pattabhi Sitaramayya writes that 18,000 Muslims left the country during this period. I have already written about Rafiq Ahmad of Bhopal. He says that it was his party along with a number of other *muhajirs* who arrived first in Kabul on May 1, 1920 or thereabouts. But Rafiq Ahmad's statement that Muammad Akbar Khan also arrived on the following day does

not seem to be correct ; for it is recorded otherwise in the judgement (31 May, 1922) delivered in the case against Akbar Khan :

“He (Muhammad Akbar Khan) was at home in Haripur in June, 1920, when the *Hijrat* movement was at its height.”

We should try to record the correct information as far as possible. I have, therefore, reproduced this brief extract from the judgement in Akbar Khan's case.

It is a fact that some *muhajirs* left India, a land dominated by the British and the Christians, in order to settle in the Muslim state of Afghanistan. Many of the young and educated *muhajirs*, probably a majority of them, wanted to go to Anatolia and fight on the side of Turkey. Even among these young men many changed their opinions subsequently. We can cite the example of Shaukat Usmani. His real name was Mowla Baksh. Mowla Baksh means ‘Allah's gift’. But the name Shaukat Usmani which he assumed at the time of his departure from India means ‘the Glory of Usmania’. Everybody knows that the Turkish Empire was called Usmanian empire after the name of ancestor Usman. Among the young and educated *muhajirs*, there were a few who wanted to go abroad anyhow and to explore whether anything could be done against the British from outside. I have elsewhere written that at Maulavi Abdur Rab's request some of the educated young men, immediately after their arrival in Kabul, got ready to go to the Soviet Union, the land of revolution. This clearly shows that not all these young men had left India with a particular passion for visiting Anatolia. Through Abdur Rab they also sought permission from the Badshah to go to the Soviet Union, but the Badshah did not grant their prayer.

After this, the educated *muhajirs* submitted a joint petition to Badshah Amanullah Khan seeking his permission to go to Anatolia. At first, Amanullah Khan procrastinated in communicating his decision. But permission was granted when the *muhajirs* announced that if they did not get passports from the Badshah they would leave even without passports. The educated *muhajirs* who were staying at Zablus Siraj divided

themselves in two groups, and Muhammad Akbar Khan and Muhammad Jan were elected their respective leaders. Muhammad Akbar Khan hailed from Haripur in the district of Hazara. He was well versed in both English and Persian. He was twenty-five or twenty-six years of age. Muhammad Jan was a native of Peshawar. The first to leave via Mazar-i-Sharif was a caravan of eighty people under the leadership of Muhammad Akbar Khan. Shaukat Usmani writes that they reached Patakesar in a little less than three weeks after a very arduous journey of three hundred miles across the Hindu Kush. The Amu Daria (Oxus) strikes the plain there. In his judgement in the case against Muhammad Akbar Khan and others J.H.R. Fraser, Sessions Judge of Peshwar, describes Patakesar as Bolshevik territory. Shaukat Usmani has written that Patakesar is situated within the Afghan border. Across the river there is Termez, a Soviet town. Usmani was right. Termez was at that time a town in the Republic of Turkestan. It has now been incorporated into Republic of Uzbekistan.

In his judgement Judge Fraser recorded one fact which has not been mentioned by either Rafiq Ahmad or Shaukat Usmani. He has written that on reaching Patakesar the *muhajirs* became suspicious of Muhammad Akbar Khan and Abdul Qayyum of Peshawar. They thought that it would be dangerous for them to enter the Soviet Union in the company of these two persons. According to the Judge, it was in Patakesar that Muhammad Akbar Khan's leadership had almost ended.

Akbar Khan came from a family of risaldars. In the social set-up prevailing at that time a family like this was—and probably even now is—aristocratic and wealthy. Hafeezullah, Akbar Khan's father, had been in the C.I.D. at one time. It had been his duty to collect information about the rebellious Muslim colonies of Chamarkand (not Samarkand) and Samasta. But these places were situated in the territories of the independent tribes between India and Afghanistan. According to the Government records, Akbar Khan was once asked to collect a bomb from Samasta which he did. It was a bomb of the Chamarkand type which was also thrown at the

Rawalpindi station. It is difficult to undersand to which side Hafeezullah really belonged. Why did the rebels give him the bomb? Who knows whether the bomb used at the Rawalpindi station was supplied by him? Any way, Muhammad Akbar Khan's leadership over the caravan of the *muhajirs* did not end at Patakesar ; it was maintained till the caravan reached Tash-kent. The Judge's statement that Abdul Qayuum was a Deputy Superintendent of Police in Lahore is also wrong. It is, of course, true that his father Khan Bahadur Abdul Hakim Khan was a Deputy Superintendent of the C.I.D. of Lahore. It was because of his father that Abdul Qayuum was regarded with suspicion. Abdul Qayuum, however, did not return to India ; he became a Soviet citizen. He married a Russian girl and served in the Soviet Union. He is no longer alive. Some time back when Rafiq Ahmad visited the Soviet Union, Abdul Qayuum's daughter was brought to meet him.

Any way, about eighty or so *muhajirs* reached Termez by crossing the Amu Daria at Patakesar. The Soviet authorities gave them a huge reception there and made excellent arrangements for their board and lodgings. Tired and exhausted by their journey across the Hindu Kush, the *muhajirs* found real rest in Termez. At that time the Turkomans in that region were in revolt under the leadership of the Basmachis and had pulled up the railway line at some places. The Basmachis were the rich peasants and feudal landlords of Turkestan and used to loot and pillage. 'Basmachi' is an Uzbek word, meaning 'robber'. The British were behind them, supplying them with arms and money. Temporarily, Termez lay cut off from the rest of the Soviet territory, and on account of the dangers on the way the Soviet authorities requested the *muhajirs* to wait at Termez and leave by steamer when it came. More than fifty per cent of the *muhajirs* in the first caravan were eager to go to Anatolia and to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Turks and they could not brook any further delay. They proposed that two indigenous boats be procured for them by which they would travel to Chardoza railway station. From there they would travel by train to Kransnovodsk and by ship to Baku.

Arrangements were made accordingly. The *muhajirs* were going by boat towards Kirkee when from the bank of the river the Turkomans invited them. They said, "Brother Muslims, you are tired and exhausted. Come, rest for a while with us!" Some of the *muhajirs* warned, "Don't steer the boat to the bank. It might be dangerous!" "Why not?" said others, "Since they are inviting us!" But when the *muhajirs* alighted on the bank, they were surrounded and then searched for fire-arms. When no fire-arms were found on them, they were made to run and beaten simultaneously. A Turk had joined the *muhajirs* at Mazar-i-Sharif. One of their companions named Sarfaraz had left them on the way. The *muhajirs*, therefore, had taken the Turk with them under the name of Sarfaraz, because the passport issued by the Afghanistan Government had been made out in his name. The presence of the Turk proved useful for the *muhajirs*. He acted as an interpreter between the *muhajirs* and the Turkomans. Ultimately, the elders among the Turkomans sat in council to decide the fate of the *muhajirs* and all the *muhajirs* were sentenced to death. The order to shoot them had already been given when an old man came rushing on horse back. He said, "Passports issued by the Afghan Government have been found on the prisoners. If they are executed, the Afghan Government will hold us responsible and might even attack our territory. Therefore, instead of killing them, let us keep them in prison." We can see from Rafiq Ahmad's statement that, thanks to the passports of the Afghan Government, the *muhajirs* were saved. Then one day the Turkomans heard the boom of the Red Army's cannon and fled, leaving their prisoners behind. The *muhajirs* were given shelter in Kirkee fort where they found everything arranged for them and there they waited for the steamer to take them to Chardozo. In the meantime the Turkomans had returned with a large armed force and besieged Kirkee fort. When the Red Army was about to counter-attack, the Indian *muhajirs* also approached the Commander for arms. They said that they would fight the Turkoman counter-revolutionaries. They were given arms and defended the river bank from

the trenches. That the *muhajirs* of our country fought shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army against the counter-revolutionaries will remain a matter of pride for us in history. Recognition of this has, at last, come from the Supreme Soviet on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. They have decorated Rafiq Ahmad of Bhopal, one of the *muhajir* combatants at Kirkee fort, with the "Medal for Combatant" for his valour in fighting against the counter-revolutionaries in Central Asia in the latter half of 1920. It is as the representative of his comrades that Rafiq Ahmad has received this medal of honour for fighting against the counter-revolutionaries. Many of them are not living today.

After the rout of the Turkoman counter-revolutionaries, the Indian *muhajirs* went by steamer from Kirkee to Chardozo where they got a huge reception. Some had thought that after the *muhajirs'* experience of being arrested by the Turkomans and nearly dying at their hands and the way they had taken up arms at Kirkee, none of them would want to go any more to Anatolia, especially when some of the *muhajirs* arrested by the Turkomans, did not come back again. But at Chardozo it was found that about a half of the *muhajirs* were still firm in their resolution to go to Anatolia. They left by train for Baku via Krasnovodsk. The Turkish officers were recruiting Turkish soldiers also in Baku at that time, and the Soviet Government was giving them all facilities. The rest of the *muhajirs* from Kirkee went to Tashkent. It was these *muhajirs* who joined the military school in Tashkent, it was these *muhajirs* who went to Moscow and studied in the Communist University of the Toiling East after the military school in Tashkent had been closed down, it was also these *muhajirs* who joined the Communist Party of India in Tashkent and Moscow. While men from other caravans also participated in these activities to some extent or other, the largest number of participants, we find, came from the caravan led by Muhammad Akbar Khan. Those from this caravan who had gone to Baku had to return frustrated. The Turks did not trust them

and allow them to join the army. They treated many other Indian *muhajirs* also in the same manner.

The first course of study at the Communist University was not a very extensive one. After the course had been completed, it was suggested that the members of the Communist Party of India should return to their country and start building the Party. Attempts were made to send them by various routes. It was decided that they should go in batches of at least two ; so everyone was asked to select a companion. As his companion Shaukat Usmani selected Masood Ali Shah, Mir Abdul Majid selected Firozuddin Mansur, and Rafiq Ahmed selected Habib Ahmad Nasim. Gauhar Rahman Khan and Muhammad Akbar Shah together formed a group. Shaukat Usmani and Masood Ali Shah had obtained Iranian passports ; and so had Akbar Shah and Gauhar Rahman. They—four of them—returned to India through Persia in batches of two. As for the others, no arrangement had previously been made for their passage through Afghanistan, now their passage through Persia too could not be arranged. So ten of them decided to go to India across the Pamir, an almost impossible enterprise but there was no alternative. The names of these ten are :

- (1) Mir Abdul Majid (Lahore)
- (2) Firozuddin Mansure (Sheikhupura)
- (3) Rafiq Ahmad (Bhopal)
- (4) Habib Ahmad (Shahjahanpur)
- (5) Abdul Qadir Seharai (Khan) (Peshawar)
- (6) Fida Ali (Peshawar)
- (7) Sultan Mahmud (Hazara)
- (8) Saeed Ahmad Raz (Delhi)
- (9) Abdul Hamid (Ludhiana District, one of the fugitive students of 1915 from Lahore Medical College)
- (10) Nizamuddin (fugitive from the army at Quetta)

The last station on the railway from Tashkent is Osh. The railway goes across the valley of Ferghana. Samarkand, Khokand, Andijan, etc., lie on the way. According to Firozuddin, their last halt on the railway was a station which was beyond



Andijan but twenty miles behind Osh. After getting down there, they had to arrange for other modes of transport. From there they went to Gulcha, from Gulcha to Murghab and from Murghab to Kharog. Kharog was the most important place in the autonomous region of Gorni-Badakhshan in the republic of Tajikistan. The Pamir lies within this region. The party covered a distance of 350 miles from Osh in twenty stages. While crossing the Altai, they suffered terrible hardships as a result of snowfall. Snow fell very heavily when they encamped on the Karakul steppe. Fortunately, there was no snow-fall at Kharog. They reached Kharog in the middle of October. There were 250/300 Russian soldiers with them. These soldiers were being posted in place of those who were to go on leave. In the list given above, the ten *muhajirs* have been divided in three batches. They were divided accordingly after their arrival at Kharog so that they could work conveniently. First-named four, namely Mir Abdul Majid, Firozuddin Mansur, Rafiq Ahmad and Habib Ahmad set out first. They came via Ishkashim. A Shignani escorted them to Ishkashim. From Ishkashim a local man escorted them upto Nugsani pass. From there they went to Chitral. The part of the Hindu Kush from Chitral to the Pamir is an extremely difficult journey. Chitral also is a part of the Hindu Kush, after which the Himalayas begin. Our comrades crossed this part of Afghanistan in secret at night ; otherwise they might have been found out.

Our comrades had planned that after reaching India they would work underground as long as possible for the Party. They entered the state of Chitral without attracting the notice of any frontier-guard. On their way to the town, they met a company of men. On being asked whither they were going, the men answered that they were going to perform the *haj*. It was learnt on further enquiry that they were bound for Mazar-i-Sharif. Mazar-i-Sharif was a place known to our comrades, "Well," they thought, "We too would say that we are returning from Mazar-i-Sharif after performing the *haj* there". They were dressed like Mahammadan mendicants.

As they were entering the city of Chitral, the people seeing the clothes they were wearing, even gave them alms. The ruler of the state of Chitral is called '*Mehtar*'. *Mehtar* is a Persian word ; it means 'chief'. We call *mehtar* (*methar*) those who clear away dirt and garbage. We give people a pompous name and get them to do the sweeper's job. This too is a form of exploitation introduced by the social system of old times. To resume my story, those four comrades met the *Mehtar*'s private secretary and informed him that they were returning after performing the *haj* at Mazar-i-Sharif. In fact, the *muhajirs* had visited Mazar-i-Sharif on their way to Turkestan. I had not felt it necessary to say anything about this place then. Now that the name of Mazar-i-Sharif has cropped up in the story told by our four comrades of their performing the *haj* there, it is necessary to give some account of the place.

### **Mazar-I-Sharif**

Mazar-i-Sharif is the capital of Afghan Turkestan. The place is sacred to a section of Muslims, particularly of the Shia *jamaat* (community). For purposes of the *haj* a visit to Mazar-i-Sharif is for them the same thing as the visit to Mecca Sharif is for other people. The ceremony of walking round the mosque of the Kaaba and reading the Id prayer in a vast congregation in an open space along with Muslims from all over the world on a fixed day of the year is called the *haj*. It is said that the grave of Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin (son of his father's brother) and the fourth Khalifa of the Muslim world, was 'discovered' at Mazar-i-Sharif. Mazar means grave. How Ali's grave could be situated there is difficult to say. Sultan Ali Mirza had his famous mosque built there some time about 1420 A.D. Muslims of the Shia community regard this mosque with great reverence. They believe that the mosque is Ali's grave. The place was a village formerly named Khayar. Later, it was called Khoja-khyaran. Subsequently, between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the grave of Ali was 'discovered' here and the 'discovery' it is said to have been proved. It is, however,

difficult for me to understand how such proofs could be obtained several centuries after Ali's death. During the first half of the nineteenth century the place was referred to as Mazar by travellers, but for a little over the last hundred years, it has been called Mazar i-Sharif.

To pick up the thread of my story, the private secretary sent a report to the Mehtar that four persons had come to Chitral after having performed the *haj* at Mazar-i-Sharif. The Mehtar ordered that each of them be given a *joobba* (clock) and fifty rupees for food. Everything was proceeding well for our comrades. A little more time and they would have disappeared, but Habib Ahmad's lack of self-control ruined everything. There lay an English newspaper on the private secretary's table and Habib Ahmad felt terribly tempted. With great effort he was restraining himself. But at the last moment his patience gave way and he asked the private secretary whether he could glance over the paper just once. The private secretary was taken aback. He realized that these men were not Muslim *dervishes* (friars): may be he pondered also—"What a dangerous thing I was going to do!" To our four comrades he said, "You can leave now. But before you leave Chitral, you just see the Agent of the India Government." When they came out, they found themselves being watched from afar by men in plain clothes. It was quite obvious to them that they were under arrest. There were four of them: Mir Abdul Majid, Rafiq Ahmed, Habib Ahmad and Ferozuddin Mansur.

They were sent to Peshawar under police guard.

This is the story of the four of the ten *muhajirs* who reached Kharog. There were three in the second batch : Abdul Qadir Sehrai (Khan), Sultan Mahmud and Fida Ali. The Ishkashim Pass through which the previous party had come had become covered with snow in the mean time. It was, therefore, decided to send them by way of Wakhan, and it took them four days by this route to reach Kalapanja, the last outpost of the Soviet Union. After reaching the Afghan border, they journeyed for two nights across very steep ascents and came to

the Borogil Pass, which was twelve thousand five hundred feet above the sea level. Here the guide left them, after pointing out the snow covered route through the pass. In due time they arrived at Chitral situated at the southern end of the Borogil Pass. It was dawn and they entered Chitral, unnoticed by anybody. They went of their own accord to the residence of the Border Officer and surrendered. These three also were sent to Peshawar under police guard.

The remaining three of the ten, Abdul Hamid, Saeed Ahmed Raz and Nizamuddin, could not make the journey on that occasion and returned to Moscow

### **The First Peshawar Conspiracy Case**

This however is not the Moscow Conspiracy Case. Some have referred to it as the Tashkent Conspiracy Case. It was, of course, the first of the Peshawar conspiracy cases held in connection with the Communist movement. Repeated mention has been made of Muhammad Akbar Khan. From Jablun Siraj in Afghanistan he set out for Soviet Turkestan as leader of a caravan of eighty *muhajirs*. I have already described the hazards and hardships of the journey. He also joined the Military School. Muhammad Akbar Khan was regarded with respect in Tashkent also. Although I cannot remember to have come across any mention of his name in Manabendranath Roy's *Memoirs*, the evidence submitted in the case against him proves that Muhammad Akbar Khan had free access to Manabendranath Roy in Tashkent. Roy respected him.

Muhammad Akbar Khan did not go to Moscow ; he came from Tashkent. Although he remained in Tashkent for a pretty long time after the formation there of the Communist Party of India, he did not join the Party. But he accepted the programme of the Party. This is proved from the evidence submitted in the conspiracy case against him. On May 13, 1921, he was seen in Kabul on his way back to India. Of course, he did not return to India immediately. He was also found in Chamarkand, the colony of rebels, in the territory of the independent tribes.

The first batch among the *muhajirs* returning to India reached Peshawar on June 3, 1921. After their return, these *muhajirs* made statements, one after another, before the Peshawar Intelligence Branch. Many of them stated that Akbar Khan was pro-Bolshevik. This set the police and the Peshawar Intelligence Bureau very much on the alert and they waited for an opportunity to lay him by the heels. But they got no wind of when and how he managed to enter India in the meantime. Muhammad Akbar Khan had decided to buy and install a printing press in the territory of the independent tribes in order to have our political literature printed there and circulated in India. He purchased and sent too a printing press to the territory of the independent tribes. There were perhaps some accessories still to be sent, and it seems that he went to Lahore in this connection. From the court documents it appears that he established contact with some workers' unions, especially press-workers' union, in Lahore. Muhammad Ali was then staying in Kabul as a representative of the Communist Party of India. Before leaving for India, Muhammad Akbar Khan had in consultation with Muhammad Ali planned everything about the mode and nature of the work he was to do in India. After his return to India, everything was also proceeding quite smoothly.

### **About Bahadur**

The police, however, came to know that Muhammad Akbar Khan had returned to India and met his father, Hafizullah Khan. Subsequently on September 25, 1921, Muhammad Akbar Khan and Bahadur, alleged to be his servant, were arrested on the far side of Shabe Kadar but within the district of Peshawar. They were going to the territory of the independent tribes across the frontier. Some information about Bahadur is needed here. Bahadur introduced himself as a Tibetan. He was engaged as a cook at Gilgit by a party of pioneers who went there to make a special survey of Kashgar. He came to India with this surveyors' party. Again, in 1919, he accompanied this party to Persia. In the middle of January,

1920, he left the surveyors' party at Bazgaran and went over to the Bolsheviks. Of course, this was the statement made on behalf of the State in the case against Muhammad Akbar Khan. Bahadur was later seen in Bukhara and Tashkent. It is difficult to say where he first met Muhammad Akbar Khan. One of the witnesses said that he had seen Bahadur also with Akbar Khan in Kabul when the latter was returning to India. According to another witness, Bahadur first met Muhammad Akbar Khan at Chamarkand. Anyway, whenever they might have met, Bahadur came with the first batch of the *muhajirs* to return to Peshawar on April 3, 1921. He eluded police surveillance and went to Muhammad Akbar Khan's house at Haripur. He carried a letter from Muhammad Akbar Khan in the name of Hafizullah Khan.

I have already said that Muhammad Akbar Khan and Bahadur were arrested on September 25, 1921. Hafizullah Khan was arrested at his own residence at Haripur on September 28, 1921.

On October 10, 1921, the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province gave sanction to prosecute at Peshawar (1) Muhammad Akbar Khan (aged 26) (2) Bahadur (aged 18), and (3) Hafizullah Khan (aged 52), father of Muhammad Akbar Khan, under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. All the three accused were then in Peshawar Jail. This was the beginning of the Communist conspiracy cases in India.

As I have already said, Muhammad Akbar Khan, the chief accused in this case, did not become a member of the Communist Party of India while he was in Tashkent. But he took very seriously the task of the Communist Party of India. He did much organisational work even within the short time he was able to move about in hiding. But whether he got arrested through carelessness or was betrayed to the police is not known to me.

We possess no documents about what passed between the Government of India and the Government of the North-West Frontier Province after the arrest of Muhammad Akbar Khan.

Cases under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code (i.e., conspiracy to wage war upon the King-Emperor) can be tried only at a Sessions Court. This case was tried also at the Sessions Court. J. H. Fraser, I.C.S., was the Judge. He delivered his judgement on May 31, 1922. He found Mahammed Akbar Khan and Bahadur guilty of the charge of conspiracy and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment for three years and one year respectively. He held that the charge of conspiracy against Hafizulla Khan had not been proved, and the latter was, therefore, acquitted.

This was how the first Communist conspiracy case staged in Peshawar ended—but not quite completely. That story follows.

### **Second Peshawar Conspiracy Case**

The case I am going to write about now was the third in point of time. But the chief accused in the first and the third cases was one and the same person : Muhammad Akbar Khan. Besides, it was not a separate case, but an off-shoot of the first one. It was simply a case of breach of jail discipline.

Muhammad Akbar Khan came from an educated *risaldar*\* family of Haripur in the district of Hazara. His was, as I have already said, a well-to-do family also. The Islamia College of Peshawar was founded by the British Government in India with the object of providing education in a British institution to boys from the families of the big Khans, so that they would develop loyalty to the British. As the British found themselves always at their wits end in controlling the dauntless Pathans, they boosted particular families. One of them was the *risaldar* family to which Akbar Khan belonged—a family of loyalists, it would appear from the very title. Muhammad Akbar Khan, a child of this family, studied in the Islamia College of Peshawar. His case records show that he failed once in the B.A. examination. When he wanted to appear a second time, he found that he was short of the required percentage of

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\* The commander of a troop of cavalry

attendance in the class. He could not, therefore, avail himself of a second chance. But he was a well educated person. Even the British Judge who tried the case against him observed that Muhammad Akbar Khan had a very good knowledge of the English language. His knowledge of Persian also was appreciated.

Born in a *risaldar* family and educated in the Islamia College as Mahammad Akbar Khan was, he did not become a loyalist. His father, Hafizullah Khan, used to supply regularly information about the revolutionary colonies of Samasta and Chamarkand to the British intelligence in Peshawar. Nevertheless, Muhammad Akbar Khan developed himself into a confirmed enemy of British imperialism. I do not know when he came to be connected with the revolutionary colonies of Samasta and Chamarkand, but there is no doubt such connections were established.

The revolutionary centre which had been established in the territory of the independent tribes at the time of the Wahabi revolt was also in existence during Akbar Khan's youth.

While deciding the appeal of Muhammad Akbar Khan Against the first case against him, preferred before the Judicial Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, the latter wrote in course of his judgment on September, '24 :

".....that the Chamarkand colony has been created artificially by a number of persons who have no other bond except the conspiracy (a revolutionary movement against the British Government and some of the members of it personally) itself. Its continuance and existence depends solely upon that conspiracy. No person could voluntarily become a member of that community unless he definitely intended to be a member of that conspiracy."

The attitude of the British Government towards the revolutionary colony of Chamarkand is reflected in this extract from the judgment of the Judicial Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province. It was this fear of conspiracy that led in Peshawar in 1923 to something disgraceful in the annals of administration of justice in the whole world.



On May 7, 1922, Muhammad Akbar Khan was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for three years in the first Peshawar Conspiracy Case. He was in Peshawar District Jail. (On March 7, 1923, he was committed again to the sessions for trial under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code by J. Almond, I.C.S., Additional District Magistrate of Peshawar. Two others were committed to the sessions along with him. They were :

- (1) Muhammad Hassan and
- (2) Ghulam Mahboob

There was a fresh charge against Muhammad Akbar Khan; which was that through some secret channel he had sent seven or eight letters out of Peshawar District Jail. The recipients were persons living outside the frontier and included members of the Chamarkand revolutionary colony also. It is not known whether the original letters reached their destination or not, but copies of them were found on the person of Ghulam Mahboob when he was searched on the Nowshera railway station platform. Muhammad Hassan admitted the handwriting in the copies to be his own. He did not know Akbar Khan's handwriting, nor he ever knew him personally. He had written the copies for money. In his letters Muhammad Akbar Khan had told his friends that he and Bahadur had been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for three years and one year respectively, he had expressed the hope that this short time would soon be over (a young man of twenty-six could very well say this) and he would join his friends and again work together. He had also wanted this information to be sent to his friends in Kabul. There was a reference to a man with teeth of gold among them. '*Comrade*' and '*tovarish*', these two words, also occur in the letters. '*Tovarish*' is a Russian word, it also means comrade.

Even assuming that every letter of the charge brought by the Government against Muhammad Akbar Khan is true, this is, for the purpose of starting a case, a very simple offence against jail discipline. Ordinarily, a prisoner is not proceeded against for an offence like this ; for this involves the question

of face-saving for the authorities. Even if proceedings are started, the sentence does not exceed a few months' term. But, for this simple offence, Muhammad Akbar Khan was prosecuted on a charge of conspiracy to wage war upon the King-Emperor, and sanction for this action was given by the Government of the North-West Frontier Province. There was mention in the letters of press accessories being despatched, but the Government failed to understand what they were for. They failed to spot who this man with teeth of gold was, Dr. Noor Muhammad or Muhammad Ali. No letter in Muhammad Akbar Khan's handwriting was placed before the court. Still this farce of a trial was carried out, and Judge Fraser, who had tried the previous case against Muhammad Akbar Khan, sentenced him to rigorous imprisonment for seven years, including a term of solitary confinement for three years. The term of seven years was to commence on the expiry of the previous sentence of three years. Muhammad Hassan and Ghulam Mahboob were each sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for five years, including also a term of solitary confinement for three months.

I have not heard of anyone anywhere else in India saying anything against this utterly arbitrary trial in Peshawar. In 1926 I had a question put in the Central Legislative Assembly though one of its members, Satyendrachandra Mitra of Bengal. It surprised Sir Abdul Qayyum of Peshawar, who came to Mr. Mitra, thanked him and said, "I should have done this myself". That was enough. Could a loyal 'Knight' of the British dare anything more?

### **The Moscow Conspiracy Case (1922-23)**

The name 'Moscow Conspiracy Case' is not an invention of mine. It is found in the files of the case. I have referred to it elsewhere as the 'Peshawar Conspiracy Case' (1922-23)—in fact, because of nothing but my ignorance at the time. I have already given the background of this case, which will explain to everybody why it was launched. I did not mention one

fact previously. I have noticed that there was a lot of correspondence over this case between the Government of India and the Government for the North-West Frontier Province. I do not think that such correspondence took place before proceeding against Muhammad Akbar Khan. At least, I have not come across any such documents. Since Akbar Khan could be prosecuted and awarded a heavy sentence, it was surprising how and why the Home Department of the Government of India came to develop misgivings about the possibility of securing conviction for the arrested prisoners on the mere charge of having studied in Moscow University. But Sir Malcolm Hailey, Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, himself expressed such misgivings. He thought of keeping the arrested persons in detention without trial under Regulation III of 1818. For young readers of today I want to make it clear that Regulation III of 1818 was really called the Bengal State Prisoners Act of 1818. Everybody knows that it was in Bengal that British rule first started, and this Act for the so called defence of the State was enforced everywhere with the extension of the British empire. Of course, for Bombay and Madras there were separate regulations. People of all classes ranging from princes and chiefs down to persons like the accused ones in the Peshawar Conspiracy Case were detained under this Act.

Along with the question of bringing the prisoners to trial, there arose the question of Rafiq Ahmed, a subject of the State of Bhopal. He had not committed any offence against the State within the territory of India. How could he be made an accused in this case? Then arose the question of Shaukat Usmani, who had come back to India and was moving about in the country. If he could be arrested and included in this case, many complications of legal procedure would disappear. But where was Usmani to be found? Usmani, however, was arrested in Kanpur on May 9, 1923, and the judgment in the Moscow conspiracy case was delivered in the Sessions Court on May 18, 1923. The Moscow Conspiracy Case was decided without Shaukat Usmani.

Even after the trial of Muhammad Akbar Khan, the Government of the Frontier Province carried on repeated discussions with the Government of India on the subject of prosecution under Sec. 121 of the Indian Penal Code, although what they had in mind was Sec. 121-A. The Government of India ultimately pointed out the error. They said, "You actually mean Sec. 121-A. Why are you repeatedly speaking of Sec. 121? Sec. 121 is waging war against the King-Emperor and the minimum punishment for this offence is transportation for life. Sec. 121-A is conspiracy to wage war upon the King-Emperor or to deprive the King—Emperor of his sovereignty over the empire of India. The maximum punishment for this offence is transportation for life, and the minimum could be anything."

The Government of the Frontier Province had no end of worry also about whom to approach for sanction to launch prosecution. The Government of India informed them that their Chief Commissioner also could grant this sanction. It was the Chief Commissioner who had given leave to prosecute Akbar Khan.

The fact was that the Government of India could not believe that if the prisoners were brought to trial, they would be convicted by court. They were, therefore, in favour of keeping the prisoners in detention under Regulation III of 1818. But Sir John Maffey, Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province, informed them that if the case was proceeded with, it would result in the conviction of the accused. However, he was not against applying Regulation III. It was the policy of both the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India first to try to get the accused convicted and, failing that, to apply Regulation III. Finally, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau also expressed the opinion that the accused would be convicted by court, but both the Sessions case and the appeal should be tried in Peshawar ; because in deciding the appeal case the Judicial Commissioner would not be able to go against the judgement he himself had pronounced on Muhammad Akbar Khan's previous appeal.

### **Moscow Conspiracy Case Opens in Peshawar**

Therefore, the Moscow Conspiracy case opened in Peshawar. After completing duly the preliminary enquiry, J. Almond, J.C.S., first class Magistrate of the District of Peshawar, committed the case to the Sessions for trial under Sec. 121-A on April 4, 1923. Fraser, the well-known Sessions Judge who had tried the case against Muhammad Akbar Khan, was waiting for an opportunity like this, and he jumped at the case. In order to prosecute anybody under the provision of any of the sections occurring in the chapter of offences against the State in the Indian Penal Code it is necessary to obtain beforehand the permission of the Provincial or the Central Government. In this case, permission was given by the Chief Commissioner of the Frontier province. The accused were :

- (1) Muhammad Akbar Shah, Vill. Badrashli in the Nowshera tehsil of the district of Peshawar, aged 23 ;
- (2) Gawhar Rahaman Khan, Vill. Darbesh, adjoining Haripur in the district of Hazara ; aged 27;
- (3) Mir Abdul Majid, Dhal Mahalla within Mochi Darwaja of the city of Lahore, aged 21 ;
- (4) Ferozuddin Mansoor, Sheikhpura town, aged 21 ;
- (5) Habib Ahmad, Shahjahanpur town, present U.P ;
- (6) Rafiq Ahmad, Bhopal City, Bhopal State, aged 24 ;
- (7) Sultan Mahmud, Haripur, Hazara district, aged 24
- (8) Abdul Qadir Khan (Sehrai), Peshawar.

Two of the accused turned approvers in this case. They were (i) Fida Ali and (ii) Ghulam Muhammad. Fida Ali belonged to Peshawar. With Abdul Qadir Khan's group of three *muhajirs*, he had reached Chitral by way of the Pamirs, Wakhan, and the Borogil Pass. He had studied in the Communist University of the Toiling East in Moscow and had also been in the Communist Party of India there. As for Ghulam Muhammad, he had not joined the Communist Party of India abroad. He had come back from Tashkent to India. The police arranged to send him to jail so that he could be used as a witness in the case. He was kept also with the accused, but it is difficult

to understand why he was allowed to stay with them. He listened to their conversations and was making up a story in his own mind. It is learnt from Rafiq Ahmad's statement that Ghulam Muhammad did not give much evidence against the accused in the lower court. But, after the case was sent to the Sessions, he testified against them with a vengeance. As for Fida Ali, he is said to have done the same thing in the lower court. At the Sessions, however, he retracted his evidence ; that is to say, he did not give evidence against the accused. From the very beginning Fida Ali had been kept separate from others in jail. In the end, both Fida Ali and Ghulam Muhammad were acquitted for turning approvers.

The accused engaged a lawyer in the lower court. It was his duty to guard against unfair interpolation of documents in the case. Since the real trial would take place at the Sessions, what was the good of spending money in the lower court?

The supervision of the case for the defence in the Sessions Court was quite good. The relations of the accused engaged Mr. Abdul Qadir (later Sir Abdul Qadir, Judge, Lahore High Court), an eminent barrister of the Lahore High Court and an eminent man of letters in Urdu. It might be that because of his supervision the Judge did not dare award heavy sentences upon the accused. As I have already said, the high officials of the Home Department of the Government of India did not believe that the accused would be convicted by court. Hence they were in favour of keeping the accused in detention without trial under Regulation III of 1818. They finally granted sanction to prosecute the accused because the place of the trial was the North-West Frontier Province.

### **Those Who Were Convicted**

On May 18, 1923, J.H.R. Fraser, I.C.S., the Sessions Judge of Peshawar passed the following sentences upon the accused under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code :

- (1) Muhammad Akbar Shah and
- (2) Gawhar Rahaman Khan (sentenced to two years' r.i. each)

- (3) Mir Abdul Majid,
- (4) Ferozuddin Mansur,
- (5) Habib Ahmad,
- (6) Rafiq Ahmad and
- (7) Sultan Mahmud, (sentenced to one year's r.i. each).

Abdul Qadir Khan (Sehrai) was honourably acquitted.

The police always try to plant their own men in every political and revolutionary movement. This is done every where ; this was done also in Tsarist Russia. Taking into account everything that occurred earlier and subsequently, it would not be in the least unfair to reach the conclusion that the British Government sent Abdul Qadir Khan as their agent with the *Hijrat* emigrants. The British Government must have sent their agents with the *muhajirs*. Later, after the October Revolution, it became necessary to collect information about the Soviet Union. Abdul Qadir Khan was a qualified teacher of Pushtu and Urdu and had passed the necessary examinations held by the Board of Examiners appointed by the Government of India. These teachers (there were also pundits to teach Sanskrit and Bengali) used to teach language to British civilians and military officers. At the time of the *Hijrat* exodus, Abdul Qadir Khan, to quote his own words, "was lecturer in Pushtu and Hindustani to the R.A.F. officers stationed at the Military Staff College, Mhow, Central India." (*The Times*, London). It will not be wrong at all to think that it was here Abdul Qadir was trained to work as an agent. It was here Abdul Qadir was taught Russian also. Speaking of the time he was studying in the Communist University of the Toiling East, he complained "....though some of us had learned Russian, the Indian Section was always taught through the medium of English." (*The Times*, London). It is not possible for anyone to learn enough Russian in course of a few months' stay in the Soviet Union to enable him to follow lectures on politics, economics, history, the theory of Marxism, etc.

It is apparent from Abdul Qadir Khan's statement that he told many lies. While making his statement before the police

in Peshawar, he said, "I went to Jablus Siraj and from there to Tashkent under Muhammad Akbar Khan of Haripur." This is a lie. Abdul Qadir has himself written in *The Times* that he did not go by way of the Oxus (Amu Daria). (But Muhammad Akbar Khan followed this route). In his article in *The Times* Abdul Qadir Khan has written that he entered Soviet territory by way of Takhta Bazar and reached Tashkent by railway via Merv and Bukhara. Most of those who went under Akbar Khan's leadership became Communists. Qadir Khan might, therefore, have thought that if he said that he had accompanied Akbar Khan the British Government would attach greater value to his report.

Abdul Qadir Khan was shot in the leg in Tashkent. I could not give a clear account of this incident in my '*The Communist Party of India and its Formation Abroad*,' because Rafiq Ahmad could not describe it clearly to me. What I have been able to make out from Abdul Qadir's statement and his article in *The Times* of London is this :

Qadir and others went from India House to the railway station. There they first surveyed the train that had come on a propaganda campaign. After the train had left, they saw that a godown near by was on fire. They stood there, looking at the scene. All of a sudden the place was surrounded by soldiers. There were some gold coins in Abdul Qadir's pocket. He told about this to his interpreter : The interpreter said that it was absolutely illegal to keep gold coins in one's possession. There was the possibility of his being searched and caught if he went out by the gate ; so Abdul Qadir Khan tried to jump over the wall. At that time he was shot in the leg by the sentry on duty. For this act of shooting Abdul Qadir has described the Soviet Government as ruthless. I do not know whether the Government of any country would have desisted from shooting in a situation like this.

Abdul Qadir joined the Communist Party of India in Tashkent. But he did not study much in the University ; he was in hospital, in a sanatorium, ten miles away from Moscow, and according to some *muhajirs* in a lunatic asylum also. Most probably, he



feigned illness. It was by staying apart from others in this manner, he might have gathered for his British masters reports about the Soviet land. In the Moscow Conspiracy Case the prosecution did not produce much evidence to speak of against him. He has himself written that in the court the public prosecutor did not demand his conviction ; he was, therefore, honourably acquitted.

Evidence is available that - after his acquittal - Abdul Qadir Khan used to maintain close contact with the police. At a meeting of the Communist Party of India in March, 1927, Gawhar Rahaman Khan gave us a report about Abdul Qadir. He said that Abdul Qadir had once been found loitering at the end of a road that led to the territory of the independent tribes. Asked to explain his presence there, he had told Gawhar Rahaman Khan that he had been expecting a certain person. That Abdul Qadir worked for the police was known to Gawhar Rahaman Khan, hence, Abdul Qadir had felt no hesitation in telling him the reason of his presence there.

Ashfaquallah Khan, an absconder in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, was a resident of Shahjahanpur, a town in Uttar Pradesh. Habib Ahmad, accused in the Moscow Conspiracy Case, also belonged to the same place. It was decided through Habib Ahmad that Ashfaquallah Khan would be sent first to the territory of the independent tribes, from there to Kabul, and from Kabul to Moscow. He would study in the Communist University of the Toiling East. Janakiprasad was then Joint Secretary of the Communist Party of India. He used to write his name as Janakiprasad Bagerhatta. The other Secretary was Sachchidananda Vishnu Ghate. The police were able to buy over Janakiprasad. Possibly, it was through him the police got the information that Ashfaquallah was trying to get out of the country ; and it was for Ashfaquallah that Abdul Qadir Khan was on the watch road. He was also rewarded for his services to the police. In 1930 (?) Abdul Qadir Khan was found to be a lecturer in the London School of Oriental Studies. It was during this time he contributed three consecutive articles to *The Times* of London under the pen-name, 'A Pupil of the Soviet'.

It is necessary to say one thing here. The accused persons in the Moscow Conspiracy Case could not use the prisoner's dock as a platform for the propagation of their ideology. Only dwellers in dreamland can talk of using the Peshawar Court as a platform for political propaganda, but this was not at all practicable. Generally, the accused defended themselves. They said that the Soviet Union had no reason to feed them if they stayed idle; hence, they had entered the Military School and the University also. Even Sir Malcolm Hailey, Home Member in the Governor-General's Executive Council, was sceptical of the possibility of the accused being convicted by court. He said that the mere fact of having studied in Moscow University could not be a ground for prosecuting anybody. But the accused were tried and convicted also. They did not say anything exceptionable in their statements to the police. In fact, after their release, most of them worked for the Party.

We have found from our experience in India that many of the revolutionaries retire from politics after their release from long imprisonment or detention in other forms. Of the seven accused who were convicted in the Moscow Conspiracy Case, Mir Abdul Majid, Ferozuddin Mansoor and Gawhar Rahaman Khan worked in the Communist Party in India also. In the beginning Habib Ahmad also worked for the Party for some time in Delhi. Rafiq Ahmed of Bhopal was also with him in Delhi for some time. At the time of the *Hijrat*, Muhammad Akbar Shah was probably reading in the Intermediate class. After his release, some time in 1925, he entered a Peshawar College and duly passed the Intermediate and the B.A. examinations. His father had wanted him to study law and become a lawyer. But law was not taught in Peshawar at that time. Akbar Shah's father was reluctant even to send him to Lahore, because Mir Abdul Majid was there. In the end Akbar Shah went to Aligarh University and passed the Law Examination. He used to practise at Nowshera. He did not do any work for the Party. Perhaps he harboured some sympathy in his mind for the Party. When in 1939, we found Akbar Shah join Subhaschandra Basu's Forward Bloc, we were astounded. To resume active (?) politics after such a long time and that

too the politics of Subhaschandra Basu—this was something which it is difficult for a Communist to conceive of. I have heard that Muhammad Akbar Shah helped Subhaschandra Basu also to get out of India through the North-West Frontier Province.

Sultan Mahmud did not join politics of any kind after his release.

Mir Abdul Majid was also one of the accused in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case (1929-33).

Seven of the accused, including Abdul Qadir Khan, crossed the Pamirs and entered Chitral. Four of them came through the Nugsani Pass and three others came through the Borogil Pass. Muhammad Akbar Shah and Gawhar Rahaman Khan came by sea with Persian passport. Of these nine, only one, Fida Ali, turned an approver.

Having read some documents myself and also heard from others something of what they have read, I have come to realize that the Intelligence Bureau failed to discover the identity of the person named 'Afzal'. They came across references to this name in letters and messages and suspected all and sundry to be Afzal. There is evidence of the remarkable patience and efficiency shown invariably by the Intelligence Bureau in deciphering names and codes. I wonder why they failed in the case of Afzal. A long time having elapsed since then, there can be no objection now to divulging who Afzal was. The officers of those bygone times are also dead. Afzal was Gawhar Rahaman Khan. Pakistan is now such a distant country to us that it is not possible to find out exactly whether Gawhar Rahamnan Khan is still living or not. I was told by a certain person that Gawhar Rahaman Khan had died.

During the period of British rule, although the North-West Frontier Province was not like Tibet a wholly forbidden country, just short of being one. It was virtually impossible for any news from inside the Frontier Province to get outside. Muhammad Akbar Khan was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for seven years under Sec. 121-A of the Indian Penal Code for the offence of smuggling letters out of jail. If the

news of this sentence had been published in India and outside and if it had provoked criticism in the press, such a sentence could never have been passed. The situation was that if the trial of the arrested prisoners in the Moscow Conspiracy Case had been held outside the North-West Frontier Province, they would have been acquitted. This was why the Government of India took stringent measures to prevent publication of the news of the Peshawar cases in the press outside and, failing that, to see to it that they did not receive much publicity. On May 18, 1923, the Sessions Judge of Peshawar pronounced his judgement in the Moscow Conspiracy Case. The news should have spread in India and abroad on the very same day ; but it didn't. Dr. Rushbrook Williams was in the publicity department of the Government of India. With supreme tact he drafted a statement of one hundred and twenty-nine words on the Moscow Conspiracy Case. The statement was given to the Rawalpindi correspondent of the British-owned English language daily, *The Pioneer*, of Allahabad on June 6, i.e. fifteen days after the pronouncement of the judgment. He might have sent it by post and it appeared in the *The Pioneer* of June 9, 1923. It is said that the statement was given to the Associated Press also. I do not know how the Associated Press gave publicity to the statement. It does not seem to me that it was published anywhere.

Although the press did not publish the news, the word spread that Bolshevik agents had been arrested from different parts of India and sent to Peshawar, where they were being tried *in camera*. No news of the trial could be secured from anywhere and even the big newspapers, owned by the British and their supreme champions, were feeling very helpless. Ultimately, *The Statesman* of Calcutta lost patience. Mr. Newman was perhaps the name of the editor of *The Statesman* at that time.

*The Statesman* wrote on August 5, 1923 : "Some weeks have elapsed since the last of a series of arrests of Bolshevik agents in different parts of India was effected. These arrests

were carried out, we believe, at the instance of the Government of the Frontier Province, which had become possessed of a list of names. At any rate, none of the prisoners was placed before the local magistracy, all being sent up for trial to Peshawar. But no word has yet come of any trial. Presumably the cases are being heard in camera, and there may be good reasons why the names of witnesses should not be divulged but the Government will be making a grave mistake if it suppresses the evidence and the result of the trial. The only effect of such a policy will be to lend colour to the suspicion that Government is shielding not only the witnesses but others who ought to be in the same dock with the prisoners."

Along with what actually happened, rumours also were spread in connection with this affair. There was a proposal to implicate Shaukat Usmani and me also in the Moscow Conspiracy Case in Peshawar. Usmani was arrested on the strength of a warrant of the Frontier Government and brought also to Peshawar. But the Frontier Government did not agree to receive me.

C. Kaye, Director of the Intelligence Bureau, was deeply pained to read the last sentence in *The Statesman's* comments. Drawing the attention of the Home Department to it, he said that he would not have minded it if it had appeared in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, but why should a paper like *The Statesman* make such an observation? It seems that when *The Statesman* spoke of 'others who ought to be in the same dock with the prisoners,' it had in view persons like the Director of the Intelligence Bureau.

But this time Sir W. Malcolm Hailey, Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, woke up. He wrote a 'private' and 'confidential' letter to Mr. Newman, editor (?) of *The Statesman*. There were not many accurate facts in the letter. It said that all the Bolshevik agents in Peshawar had been convicted; only one had been honorably acquitted. The accused were persons not much different from students, and the news of their conviction had appeared in the press. For maintaining contacts with M. N. Roy, altogether three

persons had been arrested from Lahore, the United Province (now Uttar Pradesh) and Bengal and placed in detention under Regulation III of 1818, and the Government was considering whether they could be prosecuted on a charge of conspiracy. As in cases of conspiracy being carried on by means of letters it was very difficult to establish in court the identity of their authors, the three arrested persons had not been sent up for trial to Peshawar. This statement of Malcolm Hailey is not true. Shaukat Usmani was sent to Peshawar Jail under police guard, but he was not tried there ultimately. In his letter Sir Malcolm Hailey did not mention the names of the three persons who had been placed in detention. Ghulam Hussian was arrested in Lahore. Shaukat Usmani in Kanpur in the United Provinces, and Muzaffar Ahmad (i.e. the author himself) was arrested in Calcutta in Bengal. Here I close for the present the account of the Peshawar Communist Conspiracy Case or the Moscow Conspiracy Case.

### **Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya**

I cannot conclude my account of the year 1922 without some reference to two other persons. The first of them is Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya, the second Abaninath Mukhopadhyaya. The latter is equally well known also as Abani Mukherji. I have already written that contact was established between Bhupendrakumar Datta and me. One day (in which month I cannot recall) Bhupendrakumar Datta came to me and told me that he would be staying at Hardwar with Charuchandra Ghose, who was suffering from tuberculosis. During his absence, his friend, Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya of Munshiganj, would keep in touch with me. A letter had been written to Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya asking him to come down to Calcutta. It was subsequently heard that the incidence of malaria was very high at Hardwar ; hence they did not go there. Much later they went to Dehri-on-Sone. Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya, however, came to Calcutta one day and met me. At the very first meeting I was charmed by his friendly manners. Besides nursing a patient, Bhupendrakumar Datta had to go about here and

there. I realise now that he had not even till then given up the terrorist revolutionary movement. I used to meet Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya more frequently and had, therefore, more talks with him. It also seemed to me that he had stronger leanings towards Marxism-Leninism than Bhupendrakumar Datta. It did not strike me at that time that Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya's interest in Marxism had anything to do with the emergence of Narendranath Bhattacharyya (Manabendranath Roy), a former member of the terrorist revolutionary party, as a leader of the Communist International. But, after all, he accepted Marxism, though it may be, not deeply. I have heard that he had to pay some price for this later in the terrorist revolutionary party.

In his *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* (Reminiscences of a Revolutionary Life) Dr. Jadugopal Mukhopadhyaya has written that although contacts had been established on an international level, the key for it, however, lay with me. This is a half-truth. It was Bhupendrakumar Datta who had told me that I would be responsible for sending letters abroad and that if they wanted to send any letter, they would hand them over to me for despatch. Further, even letters addressed to them personally, would be sent to my address and I would deliver those to them. It seemed to me—I might have misunderstood them - that at that time they did not want to take risks. This arrangement worked for a short time. Later, they also despatched and received letters directly. Cecil Kaye, Director of the Intelligence Bureau, has written that "after Muzaffar Ahmad's arrest Roy appointed Jibanlal Chatterjee as Muzaffar Ahmad's successor." (*Communism in India*, p. 92).

M. N. Roy must have written letters to Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya. Photostat copies of one or two of these letters (I do not exactly remember how many) were produced as evidence against us in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. The original letters perhaps reached Jibanlal; otherwise the Government would not have submitted photostat copies instead of the originals at the court. In one of these letters

M. N. Roy (my thanks to him!) expressed some concern over my arrest.

The first issue of Nazrul Islam's bi-weekly magazine *Dhumketu* (The Comet) was published on August 12, 1922. At first, the office of *Dhumketu* was on the first floor of a house at 32, College Street. It was removed later to the first floor of a building at 7, Pratap Chatterjee Lane. It is my impression that the articles in *Dhumketu* revived the dormant terrorist revolutionary movement. The terrorist revolutionary leaders used to visit *Dhumketu's* office at 7 Pratap Chatterjee Lane. I have seen Bipinbehari Gangopadhyaya come and embrace Nazrul Islam. Bhupendrakumar Datta and Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya were frequent visitors. Charuchandra Ghose, Bhupendrakumar's ailing friend, was living in a house at Shyambazar. Nazrul and I went there also to see him.

I sent to Germany many addresses where the *Vanguard* and other papers could be sent. I did not seek the prior permission of the addressees. I only ascertained whether they pursued any kind of politics. In this manner I sent also the address of the house (at Sutrapur in Dacca) of Pratul Gangopadhyaya, a leader of Anushilan Samiti. I did not know him personally at the time. He received the *Vanguard* regularly. Young workers of Anushilan Samiti had a dig over this at their counterparts in Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya's party, Jugantar : "We have connections with the communist International. We are, therefore, getting these papers. But what about you? You are not getting them." Jibanlal informed me of this. I could not send their addresses to Germany because none had given them to me earlier. However, I got the addresses from Jibanlal at once and forwarded them to Germany. Further, I collected also the old copies of all the papers that had been published till then and handed them over to Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya for transmission to Munshiganj and Dacca.

I was arrested in Calcutta on May 17, 1923, and was held in prison under Regulation III of 1818. My arrest makes a long story, which I shall tell in connection with the Kanpur Folshevik Conspiracy Case. I shall say only this much here :



my political estrangement with Bhupendrakumar Datta and Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya began with my arrest.

For several (nearly four) months I was the only prisoner under Regulation III of 1818. At first, I was in Alipore Central Jail in Calcutta. Afterwards, on September 25, 1923, Bhupendrakumar Datta and several other prominent persons came as prisoners under Regulation III also to Alipore Central Jail. Of course, they were not put in the same ward with me. I was kept alone in a ward, which in the vulgar language of jail-warders and convicts was called 'Randi Phatak'. In fact, it was once a ward for women convicts. The practice of keeping women convicts had ceased some time ago in Alipore Central Jail. When after being brought to jail, I heard that I would be put in 'Randi Pathak', I felt depressed. However, I found some consolation when I heard that Chittaranjan Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also had been in this ward.

Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya was not among those (numbering about ten) who came with Bhupendrakumar Datta to jail. He had gone to Delhi for a meeting of the Congress. He had been late in returning to Calcutta via Bombay. However, he also was arrested after his return to Calcutta. From his activities outside, it had seemed to me that there had been a change in Bhupendrakumar's views ; that is, he had decided not to proceed further in the Communist movement. But (I could not understand why) after coming to Alipore Central Jail, he sent word to me through a warder that I should try to get myself transferred to the same ward as theirs. But before I could do anything, they were transferred to Midnapore Central Jail and myself to Dacca Central Jail.

Till my arrest in May, 1923, I had sincerely trusted Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya and his fellows. I had not had the slightest misgivings about them. I believe that they also had trusted me in the same way. But now, at last, thanks to the National Archives of India, I have come to know that they had not been frank with me at least about one thing ; they had suppressed it from me. It were better if I had remained ignorant about it altogether. Now that I know it, it sort of

rankles in my mind even after the lapse of four or five years short of half a century.

Bhupendrakumar Datta and his fellow-workers were arrested in September 1923 and released during the beginning of 1928. After his release Bhupendrakumar Datta returned to his former course of politics and never even met me afterwards. Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya also did not come over to us. He did not keep aloof from the policy of boycotting the Communists adopted by the terrorist revolutionaries. But it seemed that contact with Marxism had caused some wavering in his terrorist revolutionary mind. He was friendly when we met and would drag me to a restaurant for tea. As far as I can remember, in 1931 Jibanlal Chattopadhyaya was in detention without trial in Buxa Fort, and I was one of the accused persons in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case (1929-33). At that time, he wrote me a letter from Buxa Fort saying, "Your statements before the court have created an impression on the minds of the prisoners here."

To use a colloquial expression, Jiban Chatterjee, it may be said, is a very good 'recruiter' of young boys. I mean he can attract young men into his party very ably. He has, at least he had once, a remarkable talent in this direction. Many young men from his party came over to the Communist Party of India in 1939-40 and this made Jibanlal severely attack me in one of his papers. I did not read the article, even after my attention had been drawn by my comrades to it. It was Marxism-Leninism not Muzaffar Ahmad, who drew young men from his party into the Communist Party. I wanted to cherish the memory of an old friendship.

## Kanpur Communist Conference, 1925\*

A list of thirteen names was submitted by the Government to their counsels for inclusion as accused in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. Satyabhakta was the last name on the list. The Government Counsels struck five names, including Satyabhakta's, off the list. Satyabhakta used to publish a Hindi weekly named *Pranavir* from Nagpur. We learn from police reports that after the publication of Dange's *Socialist* he used to correspond with Dange and wanted to know what books he should read. Some time before the commencement of our trial, he moved to Kanpur and opened a book-shop there at Patkapur. I do not know how many books there were in the shop, but his 'Socialist Book Shop' was advertised.

Did Satyabhakta know that his name too had been included in the list of the accused in the Kanpur Case by the Intelligence Department and struck off by the counsels for the Government of India? I think he did not. We have gathered this information recently only after reading the documents in the National Archives. Had Satyabhakta known this, he would never have come forward to build his 'Indian Communist Party' in Kanpur. He was a great coward, which is borne out by his writings. It is, however, a different matter if the source of his inspiration lay elsewhere.

\* Excerpts from Muzaffar Ahmad's Memoirs "Myself and the Communist Party of India, Pages 407-413

The appeal in the High Court in respect of the Kanpur Conspiracy Case was dismissed on November 10, 1924. Without waiting for that, on September 1 (September 10, according to some), Satyabhakta announced that 'The Indian Communist Party' had been formed in Kanpur. At that time he wrote in a newspaper, "in the Cawnpore Bolsheviki Conspiracy Case it has been settled that to have faith in Communism in itself is no offence. Thus the fear of the law against Communism has been removed."\*

I have seen two English notices circulated by Satyabhakta. The first notice was dated June 18, 1925, and was entitled 'The Future Programme of the Indian Communist Party'. The second notice, which was entitled 'The First Indian Communist Conference', was published, like the first one, from Kanpur and dated October 12, 1925. The space in my book is gradually decreasing; otherwise, I could have reproduced these two documents for the benefit of research workers.

Although it is called a 'programme', there is no programme at all in the first document. 'Freedom' and 'Swaraj'—these two words occur there. Not to speak of anything else, there is no mention even of 'full independence' in it. Maulana Hasrat Mohani had been the first to move the resolution on full independence at the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress in 1921. I cannot, therefore, at all understand how he could tolerate Satyabhakta's impudence in Kanpur. As Chairman of the Kanpur Communist Conference the Maulana made a reactionary speech, which reflected the views of Satyabhakta. Singaravelu Chettiar had faith in monetary aid from international sources, but he was extremely opposed to internationalism. He betrayed extreme cowardice after the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case. The case having ended in our conviction, the purpose of the British and the Indian Governments was fulfilled. It was proved that Bolshevism had infiltrated into India. The

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\* Quoted by Col. Kaye in his *Communism in India*, p. 143.

Government of India, therefore, decided that it was unnecessary to proceed with the case against only Singaravelu. They were taking steps to withdraw the case, but Singaravelu could not wait; he tendered 'unqualified apology' to the police.\*

The old records are gradually being revealed to our eyes, and reading them, we are making the shocking discovery of what immeasurable harm people like these did to our Party.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Communists of those times did not support the views of Satyabhakta. He quitted the conference before it ended. I have never seen him since the day he left the conference after packing his papers into a *khaddar* bag. I have recently received information that he is alive and living in Vrindavan. I have not heard whether or not he is wearing a string of beads of *tulsi* (the holy basil).

After leaving the conference, he tried to found another party, the National Communist Party. He wrote in the papers also about it but he failed. Satyabhakta left without handing over the papers, the list of members, accounts, etc., of his party. He left us nothing but Mr Hasrat Mohani, but we had to part with him also.

It is difficult to understand why Satyabhakta announced the formation of his Communist Party with such precipitate haste, without even waiting a few days more for the disposal of the appeal by the High Court, and what purpose lay hidden behind this move of his. If he had not moved, would anyone else have done this job? There was not the faintest trace of Communist ideology in the Communist Party announced by him.

I have already said that I was released from Almora Jail after only one night's stay there. I was staying in Almora to recover my health when I received from

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\* The Government, having accepted an unqualified apology tendered by Singaravelu Chettair of Madras....passed order for the withdrawal of the charge against him." (Extract from the "*Pioneer*" 30.6.24). Home Deptt Poll File No. 261. 1924.

Satyabhakta a letter asking me to attend without fail a Communist Conference being held in Kanpur. He also sent Rs30 by money order.

Those whom I met in Kanpur were Shamsuddin Hassan of Lahore, S. V. Ghate, K. N. Joglekar and R. S. Nimbkar of Bombay, Janakiprasad Bagerhatta of Bikaner, Ayodhyaprasad of Jhansi and C. Krishnaswami Ayengar of Madras. Ayodhyaprasad told me that Krishnaswami was the nephew of Rajagopalachari, which was afterwards confirmed by Krishnaswami himself. Besides meeting Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Maylapur Singaravelu Chettiar, I met Arjunlal Sethi and Kumarananda. I met another person, an old man of the name of Radhamohan Gokulji. He was respected among the Hindi writers and was a leader of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. He had been to Nepal and had also met the exiled Raja Mahendrapratap. This also was one of his credentials as a 'revolutionary'. The name of Shamsuddin Hassan was frequently mentioned during our trial. The names of Joglekar and T. V. Parvate also were mentioned in the course of our trial in connection with Dange. Parvate did not come to Kanpur. In the course of their conversations Nalini and Dange had mentioned Srikrishna Lodge and Ghate. Nalini said that he had seen our political literature lying scattered on the table of Srikrishna Lodge. Dange had mentioned the name of his 'friend' Nimbkar in connection with the Mulsipeta *satyagraha*. I did not know any of them personally at any time previously. They had heard my name as one of the accused in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case. Many have written that Joglekar put in very hard work in connection with the Kanpur Conference. But I did not notice this. It was Ghate whom I saw labour very hard; he did typing and other jobs. He used to stay in the small conference camp. Joglekar and Nimbkar were members of the All-India Congress Committee to which Joglekar had been elected for the first time that year. He told me that he had spent some money also on his election. They stayed in the Congress camp

and were quite conceited about their being members of the Congress Committee. Janakiprasad also was a member of the All-India Congress Committee, but he stayed with us in the small camp of the Communist Conference.

Mir Abdul Majid of Lahore, accused in the Moscow Conspiracy Case (and later also in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case), did not attend the Kanpur Communist Conference. It has been wrongly stated in some reports and in some books also that Abdul Majid attended the Kanpur Conference. But it is a fact that Abdul Majid was elected in absentia a member of the executive committee of the party. Majid had been a member of the Communist Party of India founded abroad, which became a section of the Third International, i.e. the Communist International.

One further fact requires mention. Shapurji Saklatvala was an Indian, but he lived in England. He was connected with the Tatas—a nephew of Ratan Tata's and one of the founders of the factory in Jamshedpur. He was elected a member of the British parliament. He was thrown out of the office of the Tatas for joining the Communist Party of Great Britain. Satyabhakta wrote letters to Saklatvala, inviting him to be President of the Kanpur Conference. Saklatvala, it is surprising, agreed without making any enquiry from any quarter. The news was circulated all over India. But the Communist Party of Great Britain asked him not to be President of a conference of a Communist Party of obscure origin. This proved to be a blessing; for it was Singaravelu Chettiar who was then chosen as President; in respect of views, he was a safe person for Satyabhakta.

The conference was entirely a childish affair. All sorts of people—one could hardly follow who they were—were going into or coming out of the single conference camp. On December 26, 1925, when the conference was in session, Satyabhakta could not be traced anywhere. The man who was translating Singaravelu's speech was making repeated mistakes. Mr Jalib, the well-known editor of the famous

Urdu daily of Lucknow, *Humdum*, who was sitting inside the conference camp, got up and translated the whole speech into Urdu. From beginning to end he pronounced 'bourgeoisie' (the word was there in print) as 'borgheese'. Because of his reputation as a great scholar, nobody said anything.

Is it a fact, as S. V. Ghate wrote in the English weekly, *New Age* of February 6, 1966, that the Communist Conference in Kanpur had Ganeshshankar Vidyarthi's blessing behind it. Then why didn't he give the Communist Conference a plot of land to set up its camp within the boundaries of the vast Congress Nagar. Didn't he give sites to numerous other organizations. As Secretary of the reception committee of the Congress session in Kanpur, held in December, 1925, Ganeshshankar Vidyarthi had full authority in such matters. As the book is growing in bulk, I refrain from recounting my personal experiences here. The Kanpur Communist Conference was held on a plot of land belonging to peasants on the other side of the road outside the Congress Nagar. It is a fact that Saklatvala sent a message to the Kanpur Conference. But M. N. Roy never sent any message. He wrote more than one lengthy letter to Ghate and Janakiprasad, severely criticising the whole business.

I have mentioned elsewhere—with proofs—when the Communist Party of India was first founded and that it was a section of the Communist International. That is the real date of the foundation of the Communist Party of India. Then why did the Right Communist Party rush in the direction of Kanpur to determine the date of its foundation. Was the Communist International a mote in their eyes? Dange, it is obvious, was the influence behind this development. Like Satyabhakta, Dange also was a champion of an 'Indian Communist Party. What he said on the 'Indian Communist Party' from a certain place in Maharashtra, after his release in 1927, made it clear to everybody at home and abroad that Dange did not believe in internationalism. This was why there was a very strong



criticism of Dange in *The Masses of India*, a journal published from Europe. Since then Dange has been silent about it. He wrote me a lengthy letter after the publication of my *The Communist Party of India and its Formation Abroad*. The sum and substance of the letter was that he had doubts about the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India being affiliated to the Communist International. On receipt of the letter, I met and had a talk with Dange in our Party office in Calcutta—Comrade Jyoti Basu was present then. Here also Dange expressed doubts about the Party becoming affiliated to the Communist International. He said to me, "You have used quite restrained language about Bhupendranath Datta." Needless to say, Dange had read the original Bengali edition also of my book. What is surprising is that when it became necessary to abuse me Dange observed that I had used immoderate language towards an old man like Bhupendranath Datta. Anyway, I think that the Communist Conference in Kanpur was a disgraceful affair. After the three Communist Conspiracy Cases in Peshawar and the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case, how could one think of tracing the foundation of the Communist Party to the farce staged by Satyabhakta? We, some of us, formed—rather were forced to form—a committee in Kanpur. Satyabhakta tarnished the name of the Communist Party. If Satyabhakta had not contrived his farce, the Communist Party would have been as underground organization and Dange, perhaps, would not have joined it. Before the Kanpur Case, Dange sometimes wrote in his letters that he was no believer in secrecy. There are such letters among the case exhibits, which include also secret letters written by him. Without the knowledge of his correspondents, Dange would receive secret letters at the universally-known address of his house and thus expose the identities and addresses of the comrades to the police.

## **Communist Party of India's Manifesto\***

On the eve of the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress, the nationalist movement presents a picture which is apparently very discouraging. What a change compared with the situation that prevailed in 1920-21 when the people were enthusiastically gathered around the National Congress eagerly looking up to it for a courageous lead in the fight for freedom!

Today the National Congress exists but in name, a number of conflicting political groups contending for the possession of its prostrate frame. Nationalism—the courageous fight for real freedom—is drowned in the surging sea of communalism. Bickering over petty formalities is the outstanding feature of political life of the country. More than half a dozen political constellations are vilifying each other. Each claims to represent the nation. But none of them touch the vital issues before the nation, their sole object being to secure a majority in the legislatures.

Even those who recognise the impotence of these pseudo-parliamentary bodies are nevertheless frantically trying to enter them. They have forgotten that the road to freedom does not lie through the blind alley of those impotent and unrepresentative legislative bodies. They have forgotten that in the fight for national freedom these at best can only serve as auxiliaries to other more powerful and effective weapons.

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\* To The All India National Congress, Gauhati Session

### **The Legislatures do not Represent the People**

The present legislative bodies, to capture which has become the beginning and end of the programme of nationalist parties, are impotent. They are impotent because they do not represent the people. Being unrepresentative, they cannot act as the vehicle through which popular energy can find adequate expression. The experience of the last two years should have made this abundantly clear. The Swaraj Party entered the councils ostensibly with the object of wrecking them. What actually happened, however, was the wreck of the Swaraj Party on the treacherous ground of pseudo-parliamentarism.

Although the situation is as clear as daylight, it may be useful to give a few facts showing the unrepresentative character of the legislative bodies established by the reforms of 1919. It is necessary to repeat this axiomatic truth because of the lamentable parliamentary degeneration of the entire nationalist movement.

The total population of British India (excluding Burma) is 221,500,000 in round numbers. Of these a little less than 5,000,000 are qualified voters according to the findings of the Southborough (franchise) committee. That is to say, about 2.2 per cent of the entire nation is enfranchised by the reforms! The councils at best, therefore, represent this small minority. The overwhelming majority of 97.8 per cent, being unenfranchised, cannot make themselves heard or felt through these bodies.

Is not the nationalist movement reared on a very narrow social foundation when its programme and policies are largely concerned with entrance into an action within these legislative bodies? Can the nationalist parties which stake their very existence on capturing a sufficient number of seats in these councils be expected to shake the power of imperialism? Still, these unrepresentative legislative bodies have become the centre of nationalist politics. Consequently, the nationalist movement as represented by the existing political parties is divorced from the popular masses. It has

neither the power nor the will to fight for freedom. The general desire is to reach a compromise with imperialism without losing face. Mutual recrimination and loud protestations of patriotism do not change the essentials of the situation.

### **No Fundamental Differences among the Nationalist Parties**

Nationalist criticism of the councils seldom concerns their unrepresentative character. Neither the National Congress nor any particular party inside or outside it has ever conducted a campaign for the extension of the franchise. The National Congress in the beginning boycotted the reformed councils not as a protest against their unrepresentative character, but owing to the limited power conferred on them. The general nationalist demand is that the government should be responsible to the legislatures representing 2.2 per cent of the population. This would be considered self-government! Political domination and economic exploitation of the people by British imperialism would obviously be considered tolerable and permissible provided that they are carried on with the sanction of the legislature representing the enfranchised few of the native upper and middle classes.

The year 1925 was marked by a complete decomposition of the nationalist movement. The National Congress was split up into warring factions. But there is little fundamental difference between these parties. They all subscribe to the program of self-government within the British empire. Even their immediate demands are identical.

The bitter controversy between the orthodox swarajist leaders and dissidents (responsivists and independents) confused the situation. The rank-and-file members and adherents of the Swaraj Party failed to see the sham character of their fight over formalities. Ostensibly, the difference was only on one point—on what condition the nationalists should accept office. On principle, however,

there was no objection to accepting office under the present constitution, which only three years ago was boycotted.

During his negotiations with Malaviya, Motilal Nehru stated on 15 September that "the general principle and policy laid down in the resolution of the Kanpur congress shall be adhered to." But two days later, after the negotiations had broken up, the central organ of the Swaraj Party wrote editorially:

"The result of the elections would go a great way to show if the country wanted a change of policy formulated by the Kanpur congress...The Swaraj Party would also approach the Congress to formulate a new policy, if necessary, in the light of the mandate of the country" (*Forward*, 17, September).

Where is the fundamental difference between the two parties then? Both are ready to change principles and policies at the behest of the electorate representing 2.2 per cent of the population. Both are prepared to override the interest of the unfranchised masses in favour of an infinitesimal minority. The independents stated the new "principle and policy" of agreement with imperialism before the election; whereas the swarajists wanted only to temporise. At the moment of writing, the results of the election are not fully known. But it is a foregone conclusion that the swarajists will lose ground. Nowhere will they have an independent majority to carry on their old tactics. So they will approach the Gauhati congress to revise the decisions of the Kanpur congress. The endeavour will be made to trick the National Congress into sanctioning a policy of compromise dictated by the interests of the upper and middle-class minority.

The authority of the National Congress will be asserted, it will regain its position as the supreme organ of the Indian people, only if at Gauhati the tricky politics of the bourgeois leaders are frustrated. This can be done by mobilising the rank and file on a platform of revolutionary nationalism.

### **Contradictions Inside the Swaraj Party**

One by one the consciously bourgeois elements have gone out of the Swaraj Party. But unfortunately the leadership of the party still remains predominantly bourgeois. The left-opposition which saved the party by repudiating the treacherous Sabarmati pact, and which made itself felt in Bengal, is still incapable of and unwilling to revolt openly against the bourgeois leaders. But the Swaraj Party will not be able to become a party of the people, leader of the fight for national freedom, until and unless it breaks away completely from the bourgeoisie, seeking compromise with imperialism.

The weakness of the Swaraj Party has always been the contradiction between the leadership and the ranks. The programme and policy of the party have always been dictated by the interests of the capitalist and land-owning classes; but the members and adherents of the party largely hail from other sections of society. The party has always defended aristocratic and bourgeois interests while making some meaningless gestures to hoodwink its revolutionary following. But in course of time even these meaningless gestures became somewhat harmful to the agreement between British imperialism and the native upper classes. The Swaraj Party stood at the parting of ways. It must completely betray its petty-bourgeois followers or forfeit the votes of the upper and middle classes. The latter eventuality would be fatal for a party which had staked its existence on the success of a parliamentary policy.

Serving as a connecting link with the people, the petty bourgeoisie give the Swaraj Party a national significance. But most of them cannot give it the vote. Connection with the popular masses would be vital for the party that wants to lead a revolutionary fight. For a party depending exclusively on parliamentary action, however, the electorate is more important than the nation. The class composition of the present electorate demands that any party seeking its vote must be committed to defending capitalist and landowning interests. Should these interests conflict with those of the nation, the latter must be betrayed.

This was the vital issue in the controversy that raged in the period immediately preceding the elections. The bourgeois leaders who still remained at the head of the Swaraj Party were called upon to speak clearly on this point: Would they throw overboard their trusting lower-middle class following, betray the people and stand openly as the spokesmen of the capitalist and landowning classes? They evaded a straight answer. By means of sophistry and hair-splitting over formalities, they deceived the party. Actually, however, they have betrayed the party and the nation. Their insistence upon staking the future of the party on the verdict of the electorate is a violation of the sovereignty of the people. They would make not only the Swaraj Party, but the National Congress, an instrument to be used in the interests of the small minority—enfranchised by the grace of Britain.

### **The Programme must be changed**

The Swaraj Party cannot rescue itself from the deadening grip of bourgeois influence unless it adopts a new programme. A new programme reflecting the interests of the people and providing for militant mass action for the realisation of national freedom will put the leaders to the test. They must either accept that programme and thereby burn the bridge over which they want surreptitiously to sneak over to the camp of the bourgeoisie with the party in their pocket, or leave the party, following the example of their spiritual comrades who have preceded them.

The programme of the Swaraj Party is essentially a programme of bourgeois-nationalism. Literally, it is ambiguous. For example, while formulating its broad principles at Gaya, C. R. Das said:

"Swaraj is indefinable, and it is not to be confused with any particular system of government. Swaraj is the natural expression of the national mind, and must necessarily cover the whole history of the nation."

This statement ought to be laughed at, were it not so

tendentious. Das could not have been able to carry the best elements in the nationalist movement with him had he at that critical period defined swaraj, which was enunciated as an undefinable metaphysical category at Gaya, in the course of two years and a half assumed a very definite material form—a particular system of government. At Faridpur, the swarajist leader defined swaraj as dominion status within the British empire. The party, intellectually paralysed by the cult of hero worship, could not even ask the leader how such a modest place on the outskirts of the British empire would be "the natural expression of the national mind covering the whole history of the nation."

Dominion status is not an expression of the national mind. It corresponds with the interests of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Here is what C. R. Das has had to say in favour of dominion status: (1) it brings material advantage, (2) it affords complete protection; and (3) it provides all the elements of swaraj (Faridpur speech).

Dominion status will bring material advantage to whom? To the Indian bourgeoisie. An agreement with imperialism will assure the development of Indian capitalism. Protection is needed by those who have something to protect. They again are the capitalist and landowning classes who are afraid that national revolution involving the worker and peasant masses might encroach upon their preserves. The classes of Indian society that live and thrive by exploiting the toiling masses and to whom national freedom means the freedom to increase this exploitation, want the protection of British imperialism against the possible revolt of the people. This is the meaning of dominion status. Material advantages for the Indian bourgeoisie and protection of the rights and privileges of exploiting classes—these are the principal elements of the swaraj, which the founder of the Swaraj Party desired to see established.

So long as the Swaraj Party stands by the programme outlined at Gaya and expounded in detail at Faridpur by its founder, it cannot claim to be essentially different from the



other nationalist parties. It must go the same way as that pursued by other parties committed to the defence of the upper classes. Even dominion status is a far cry. It won't be granted by imperialism just for the asking. There must be a long period of apprenticeship, which must be served by co-operating with imperialism on the basis of the reforms. The nationalist bourgeoisie are anxious to serve this apprenticeship to qualify for a further instalment of concessions—economic and political.

This is the situation in which the Congress meets at Gauhati. It must choose between the enfranchised 2.2 percent and the unfranchised, oppressed and exploited 97.8 per cent of the nation. The hypocritical policy of shouting "swaraj for the 98 per cent" and doing the bidding of the 2 per cent cannot be carried on any longer without ruining the nationalist movement, without prostituting the name and prestige of the National Congress.

The opinion of the *Forward* quoted above, and more than one pronouncement of the swarajist leaders in a similar strain, do not leave any doubt about the policy that will be pressed upon the Congress as soon as the results of the election are known. In the very unlikely event of the swarajists increasing their forces in the councils or even retaining their present strength, they will accept office. The fiasco of the last two years cannot be repeated all over again. In the much more likely eventuality of their defeat in the polls, they will, of course, change their policy and try to secure the sanction of the Congress for this bankrupt policy of surrender and compromise.

The National Congress can save itself only in one way.

It is roundly repudiating the programme and policy that seek to make it an instrument of parties betraying national interests for the sake of a small minority. The repudiation of the bankrupt policy of bourgeois nationalism should be followed by the adoption of a program of democratic national freedom. Pseudo-parliamentarism should be replaced by militant mass action. The policy of surrender and compromise should be discarded in favour of a policy of

courageous and genuine fight with imperialism. The National Congress should be liberated from the treacherous bourgeois leadership and brought under the inspiring influence of a republican people's party.

### **Communal Conflicts**

Many must have been discouraged by the communal conflicts that have been devastating the country during the last years. It is certainly a discouraging phenomenon. But here again a party of the people will find the solution. While the upper classes fight for rights and privileges, the masses of both the communities have one very vital thing in common. It is exploitation. Hindu and Muslim workers are sweated in the same factory. Hindu and Muslim peasants toil on the land, side by side to be equally robbed by the landlord, the money-lender and the agents of imperialism. The Muslim worker is not better paid when the employer is his co-religionist. Nor does a Hindu landlord take less rent from a Hindu than from a Muslim tenant.

The same rule largely applies to the exploited middle classes (petty intellectuals, small traders, artisans, etc.). United by the common tie of exploitation 98 per cent of the entire people have no reason to be involved in the communal conflicts. Help them to be conscious of their economic interests, give them a courageous lead to fight against their common enemy, the forces of exploitation, and the bottom will be knocked out of the insidious policy of provoking communal conflict. It is true this cannot be done overnight. But there is no other remedy for the cancer of communalism which eats into the vitals of the nationalist movement.

The collapse of the nationalist movement has given an impetus to the communal conflict. Reorganisation of the nationalist movement with a program of militant mass action will remove this impetus. Non-cooperation and the khilafat agitation quickened religious fanaticism at the expenses of political consciousness. This grave error must

be rectified by placing the nationalist movement on a solid secular basis. The masses should be mobilised under the banner of nationalism with slogans of immediate economic demands. Land tenure, land rent, usurers' charges, prices, wages, working conditions, primary education—these should be the main topics of agitation. On every one of these points, vitally concerning the life of the people, the identity of interest can be made clear very easily. Agitation along these lines, therefore, will provide for the safest guarantee against communal tension, while building up a solid basis for the nationalist movement.

Democratic principles, however, do not operate against the interests of national minorities. The mutual distrust between the Hindus and Muslims in India has a historical background. The communal question, therefore, should be approached as the question of a national minority. One of the main planks in the nationalist platform must be the protection for national and communal minorities. If the nationalist movement fails to guarantee this protection, imperialism gets the chance of offering it and thus drives a wedge straight through the nation.

The behaviour and pronouncements of more than one prominent Hindu nationalist leader gives the Muslims sufficient reason for suspicion. The extra-territorial patriotism of a section of the Muslim leaders, on the other hand, gives a handle to the injurious propaganda of the Hindu reactionaries. Excesses on both sides should be avoided. The surest guarantee against communalism is the mobilisation of the masses on the basis of their economic interests. Class lines cut deeply across the superficial and often artificially drawn communal lines.

### **National Interest and Class Interest**

The recrudescence of communal conflicts has been very harmful to the nationalist movement; but the present de-composition of the movement is caused primarily by the conflict of class interests inside the nationalist ranks. Indian

society is as much divided into classes as capitalist society in any other country.

The relation of British imperialism with the different classes of Indian society is not uniform. The nation is oppressed and exploited by a foreign power. But the pressure of this oppression does not fall equally on all the strata of the Indian population. The object of exploitation is not the entire people, but only the classes that produce wealth by their labour-power. These are the workers and peasants constituting over 90 per cent of the nation. The quarrel between imperialism and the upper classes of Indian society is a quarrel over the booty. Native landlords and capitalists also live at the expense of the producing masses. But the monopolist policy of imperialism did not permit them an unrestricted economic development which would increase their capacity to exploit the working class. The major portion of the values produced by the Indian workers and peasants go to swell the pockets of imperialism. The Indian bourgeoisie were allowed only a modest middleman's share. In course of time they have become dissatisfied with this small portion of the booty. They wanted an ever-increasing share and finally the prior right over the entire resources of labour-power of the Indian masses.

The Indian bourgeoisie, however, could not realise their aspirations for the mastery of the country without challenging the monopoly of imperialism. This again they can not do by themselves. India cannot become free from foreign domination except through the revolutionary action of the entire people. But the popular revolt against imperialism is not caused by the grievances of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It has its own causes. The popular masses rise against exploitation as such. Consequently, the nationalist bourgeoisie, who would like to be the sole masters and rulers of the country, do not dare to use the weapon which alone can seriously threaten the imperialist hold on the country. National interests—the interests of the 98 per cent—are thus sacrificed for class interests. The attempt to conquer sole mastery over

the country being fraught with possible danger of im-mense gravity, the nationalist bourgeoisie enter into agreement with imperialism to exploit the Indian people jointly.

Why does imperialism enter into such an agreement? There are several reasons. Firstly, the general crisis of capitalism has weakened the basis of imperialism so much that the policy of the old classical colonialism must be revised. Secondly, the Indian market is attacked by Japan, USA, Germany, etc.; only goods manufactured in India with cheap labour can compete with these intruders. Therefore Britain adopts the policy of industrialising India under the domination of imperialist finance. Thirdly, the decline of the accumulation of capital in Britain does not permit her to spare sufficient capital to carry on the programme of industrialising India. She must draw Indian capital into operation. Fourthly, the mass character of the post-war nationalist movement forces imperialism to win over to its side ever-wider strata of the native society.

A foreign power cannot rule a country for a long time unless supported by a certain native element. A government to be stable must have a social basis. Up to the world war, two social factors supported the British government in India. They were the landowning class and the peasantry. These two together constitute a majority of the population. So imperialism had a sure social base. But these two social forces did not support the British government in the same way. The landowning class gave positive, conscious support, while the peasantry provided an unconscious support, by virtue of its passive loyalty. Since the war, the situation has changed. The passive loyalty of the peasant masses has been disturbed. It has been replaced by a state of seething revolt which breaks out from time to time; consequently, the basis of imperialism is now seriously shaken. A new ally must be found to reinforce it.

The new ally is the nationalist bourgeoisie (bankers, merchants, manufacturers, high officials and the professional people closely connected with these classes). In the years

following the war, the nationalist movement was heading towards revolution. The ominous prospects were dreaded by a nationalist bourgeoisie. They decided to travel the safer way, and accept the junior partnership with imperialism in the exploitation of the Indian people.

The defection of the bourgeoisie left its mark on the nationalist movement. Compromise and surrender became the policy. This sacrifice of the people on the altar of class interest has been carried on by stages ever since 1922. The last stage will be when the new legislative assembly and council meet. It does not matter what form it will take. There may still be staged the farce of his majesty's opposition. But, essentially, the parties representing the bourgeoisie will give up all real resistance to imperialism and co-operate—either "honourably" or "responsively"—with the British government.

### **What is to Be Done?**

The reconciliation of the antagonism between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie, however, does not remove the basic cause of a national revolution. The necessity of freedom for the Indian people is not determined by the sectional interests of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The agreement between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie does not free the Indian people from political domination and economic exploitation. Nearly 98 per cent of the population still remains without any political rights. Economic concessions to native capitalism are not and will not be made by reducing the share of imperialism. The latter will increase the exploitation of the labouring masses who will be forced to produce value for native capitalism over and above what they produce for imperialism. This being the case, the fight for national freedom must be continued. The nationalist movement must be a movement of the masses with a programme reflecting the interests of the majority of the people. The programme of the movement must be free from all haziness and ambiguity, such as has been the case with the swarajist programme.

Particularly clear should be the position of the nationalist movement on the agrarian question. The peasantry constitute over 70 per cent of the population. It is the most important economic factor in the present state of Indian society. It will play a decisive role in the movement for national liberation. The fight for the peasantry should be one of the main tasks of the nationalist movement. Imperialism is endeavouring skilfully to regain the confidence of the peasantry. During the last years, it has forced upon the landowning class tenancy reform laws in several provinces. This has enabled it to take in hand the alarming situation created by the acute agrarian disturbances in 1919-21. The next step in the attempt to regain the confidence of the peasantry is the royal commission on agriculture. Needless to say that the motive behind all these moves is not to help the peasantry, but to deceive them. Brutal exploitation of the peasant masses is the main source of imperialist profit from India. To frustrate the sinister designs of imperialism to regain the confidence of the peasantry, the nationalist movement must adopt a radical agrarian programme and expose the motive of the so-called reform measures passed or proposed by the government.

The following occurred in the manifesto issued by the Swaraj Party on the eve of the 1923 elections:

"It is true that the party stands for justice to the tenant, but poor indeed will be the quality of that justice if it involves any injustice to the landlord."

If the nationalist movement wants to secure active support of the peasant masses, it must liberate itself from the reactionary point of view expressed in this quotation. Such a programme is necessary for a party fishing for the vote of the landed gentry; but it is positively harmful for a party that proposes to lead the popular masses in the fight for freedom. If you are so careful as not to touch the privileged position of the landowners, you can only do injustice to the peasantry. The landowning class is a social parasite that sucks the blood of the peasantry. Then, over

nearly half the country, the government is the landlord. The maxim of justice should also apply there.

Thus the swarajist program about the peasantry not only protects the parasitic landowners: it gives British imperialism an unlimited lease of life. The agrarian programme of the nationalist movement must be to defend the interests of the peasantry. It should be directed ruthlessly against all the agencies, foreign and native, that exploit the peasantry.

### **The Programme of The Nationalist Movement**

The movement for national freedom can be led to victory only by a party of the people. Unless it is led by a party which acts according to a clearly-defined programme, the nationalist movement will be floundering like a rudderless ship. It is remarkable that for years the leaders did not tell the country what exactly was the object of the nationalist movement. Swaraj was defined as everything but what it is—national independence. The nationalist movement loses all meaning if its object is not to secure national freedom. National freedom—it is a very clear expression. It does not require any legal or constitutional commentary. It means freedom for the people to establish its own government—to manage its own affairs, political, economic, cultural and so forth. Up till now this fundamental point of the nationalist programme has not been clearly and squarely placed before the country. This must be done as the first act in reorganising the nationalist movement. Let not the controversy over the conditions under which nationalists should accept office confuse the main issue. All the existing nationalist parties today are committed to the programme of dominion status. Even that much is not demanded immediately. Some measure of responsibility to the present unrepresentative legislature would placate the most radical element. This is no struggle for national freedom. It is mockery. It is a downright betrayal of the nation.

*The people must have freedom, complete and unconditional. There must be a people's party to demand and fight for this freedom.*



Then, national freedom is not a thing in itself. National freedom would not be worth having and fighting for if it did not bring the people political and economic rights that they are deprived of under the present conditions. The concrete form of national freedom will be the establishment of a *republican state* based on advanced democratic principles.

A *national assembly elected by universal adult* (man and woman) *suffrage* will be the supreme organ of the people. All caste and class privileges will be abolished. The country will be thoroughly democratised.

To the masses, national freedom must offer more concrete advantages. It must remove their immediate economic grievances and guarantee them a higher standard of life. National freedom must establish the principle: *The land belongs to the tiller*. Parasitic classes living in luxury on unearned incomes from land will be deprived of their vested interest. The enormous sums that swell the pockets of landowning class will go to relieve the burden on the peasantry. Land rent will be reduced all round. Poor peasants, eking out a miserable existence on uneconomic holdings will be entirely exempt from rent. The peasantry will be protected against the excesses of the money-lenders. The national government will help the peasantry by means of extensive agrarian credits. The cultural level of the peasantry will be raised through the introduction of machinery in agriculture and through free primary education.

The national government will guarantee the industrial workers *an eight-hour day and minimum living wage*. There will be legislation as regards decent working conditions and housing. Unemployed workers will be taken care of by the state.

Public utilities such as railways, waterways, telegraphs etc. will be the property of the nation. They will be operated not for private profit, but for the use of the public.

Workers (also peasants) will have full freedom to combine, and the right to strike to defend their interests.

There will be complete freedom of religion and worship. National and communal minorities will enjoy the right of autonomy.

These are the main points of the programme which will unite the overwhelming majority of the people and set them in irresistible action. The programme of bourgeois nationalism (defence of the interests of the capitalist and landowning classes) has betrayed the nation. The nation must assert itself and move towards freedom in spite of the treachery and timidity of the bourgeoisie. The National Congress must be liberated from the influence of hypocritical bourgeois politicians. Those willing to fight honestly and courageously for freedom must become the spokesmen of the people. The party that wishes to lead the struggle for national liberation must become the party of the people, representing not the fortunate few of the electorate, but the unfranchised majority. Council chambers present too restricted a field of operation for the party of the people, which must find much wider spheres of action.

*National independence and complete democratisation of national life in every respect*—these are the main planks of the nationalist platform. The battle to realise this programme must be fought with the slogan: "*Land, Bread and Education.*"

1 December 1926

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

## Formation of All India Workers & Peasants Party in 1928

### A. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS\*

Comrades,

Before I read my address I wish to thank you for the high honour that you have done me by electing me the President of the first Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference. I know full well that there are many comrades in our party who are head and shoulders above me in ability and learning. My thought first was not to accept this tremendous responsibility, but the insistence of friends left me no other choice but to bow my head before your decision. I am conscious of the great honour you have done me by reposing your trust in me and I am sure I shall receive your full co-operation to make this conference a success.

Calcutta is a historical place, where many events of far-reaching effects have taken place. But for a Punjabi its historical significance is increased by its association with the Kauma Gata Maru incident where many Punjabis that had gone to Canada to seek entrance but were refused, were received with shots on their return to their mother country. Bengal and the Punjab again co-operated in 1914-15 to wage the second war for liberty against the foreign yoke; but their efforts failed to achieve the desired goal. Hundreds of our brethren were hanged and hundreds were transported for life many of whom are still rotting in jails. I think many more will have to suffer imprisonment or other tortures whether with or without trial, before our country can win

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\* By Sohan Singh Josh—Calcutta, December 21, 1928.

freedom and until that is done no self-respecting Indian can afford to sit quiet and not do his level best to free the motherland from the imperialist thralldom.

**CONGRESS :** The movement for liberty began in 1881 when the Indian National Congress came into being. The people that took interest in the movement were mostly lawyers, barristers and other educated persons. They gathered once a year in some big city where they made fiery speeches and passed many resolutions that mainly concerned their class interest. They also put forth their demands before the Government. Their fight was mainly a fight for the loaves and fishes of office. At the annual session great enthusiasm was manifested ; but during the rest of the year practically nothing was done. This state of affairs continued uptil 1914. During this interval the only notable movements were the Punjab Agrarian Movement led by L. Lajpat Rai and S. Ajit Singh and the Bengal Swadeshi Movement. These attracted a good deal of public attention.

In 1914 the Great War began. In reality this was the time for taking advantage of the helplessness of the British Government, for one's difficulties are the opportunities for one's enemies ; but unfortunately our leaders cast in their lot with the Imperialists and Capitalists, because under the influence of the British propaganda they were led to believe that the War was being waged "to make Democracy safe". But their eyes were opened soon after the War was over, and they realised that the safety of Democracy and smaller nations was a mere excuse to cover their imperialistic aggrandisement and all the utterances of the British Statesmen were fabrics of lies. Nothing was done towards the liberation of the country during 1914-19. It was after the close of the war and the shattering of all the hopes of the leaders that Mr. Gandhi stepped into the political arena. He united the country by placing before it the tripple programme of the Punjab Wrong, the Khilafat Question and the Hindu-Muslim Unity. Under his leadership the non-co-operation movement was launched which, as you know, became very popular. It brought great awakening among the masses. But after the

Chauri-Chaura incident came the Bardoli resolution which suspended not only mass Civil Disobedience and No-tax campaign, but practically all other activities as well. Thus the problem of liberty remained unsolved.

From its very inception the Congress has been fighting for the class interest of the bourgeoisie. It has never placed before the masses a programme expressing the needs and demands of the masses who have been totally neglected in its programme. This is why they did not take any interest in the national movement. The masses were attracted by the Non-co-operation Movement for it held out to them a hope of lightening their burdens through the then proposed No-tax Campaign, besides freeing them from the clutches of the landlords. The Bardoli Resolution however proved that Mr. Gandhi too was not with the masses ; but was consciously or otherwise, acting for the interests of the landlords and the capitalists, for by letting intact the prevalent order of things he showed that he was content to leave the cultivators to the mercy of the landlords without even raising their voices of protest. If any man entertain a doubt about this, let him pursue the Bardoli resolution given below :

(1) The Working Committee deploras the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri-Chaura in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned police station.

(2) In view of the violent out-breaks every time mass civil disobedience is inaugurated, indicating that the country is not non-violent enough, the Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience .... be *suspended and instructs the local Congress Committees to advise the cultivators to pay land revenue and other taxes due to the Govt. and to suspend every other activity of the offensive character.*

(3) The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued until the atmosphere is so non-violent as to insure the non recurrence of atrocities such as at Gorakhpur or of the hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras on the 17th of November and the 13th of January.

(4) All volunteer processions and public meetings for the defiance of authority should be stopped.

(5) *The Working Committee advises Congress workers and organisations to inform the ryats (peasants) that withholding of rent payment to the Zamindars (Landlords) is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country. The Working Committee assures the Zamindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even when the ryats have grievances, the committee desires that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration.*

This class resolution clearly proves that the No-tax campaign and the mass civil disobedience movement were given up not because of the Chauri-Chaura incident, but because of the cultivators being resolutely bent upon not paying rent even to the landlords. The peasants who had become conscious of their rights joined this movement in the hope of being freed from the tyranny of the landlords. They made great sacrifices, but the Congress leaders said to them that the "interests of the country" required that they should pay the rent, which meant that men who could be counted on fingers be allowed to exercise this tyranny over the peasants who formed 75% of the total population, and keep them under their thumb for ever. How strange is the "interest of the country" that require that millions should suffer the pangs of hunger and want in order to support the luxury of a few? The passing of this resolution convinced the peasants and workers that this movement was not going to ameliorate their condition. They withdrew themselves and the non-co-operation movement came to an end.

Mr. Gandhi was followed by Mr. C. R. Das with the slogan that he would fight for a Swaraj which would give freedom to the 98% of the people of India. But his attitude soon showed that he too was fighting for the bourgeois interests and was doing nothing to liberate the masses from the clutches of the money-lenders, the capitalists and the landlords. The greater part of his time was spent in the Councils. After his death

one of his co-workers who had studied him at close quarters wrote about him, "Mr. Das was not a revolutionist, he stood between India and revolution". This fact and his other activities clearly show that he too was a reformist leader.

After his death the leadership of the Swaraj Party passed into the hands of P. Motilal Nehru. By writing the report associated with his name the Pandit has proved that he too can sacrifice the interests of the masses for the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landlords. In short I can say without fear of any contradiction that upto now the Congress movement has been carried on for the benefit of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, and has done nothing for the amelioration of the lot of the masses.

The country has now before it the burning topics of the boycott of the Simon Commission, the Nehru Report and many others with which now I deal one by one.

**SIMON COMMISSION :** I do not wish to take much of your time in dealing with the Simon Commission, because I do not attach much importance to it. I am fully convinced that this is a move to strengthen the Imperialist hold on India. But there is one thing to be mentioned, which is that the movement of boycott and hartals has put a new life and vigour in the country. The national movement that had slackened since the abandoning of the Non-co-operation movement, has again gained strength. The enthusiasm shown by the masses in demonstrations against the Simon Commission is highly praiseworthy. Now the question arises, will the enthusiasm of the masses be so directed as to prove beneficial to the country, or will it be allowed to subside without accomplishing anything? The Congress has been unable to place before the masses a programme expressing their needs and demands. This is why many movements come and go without benefiting the masses.

Most of the Congressmen and the liberals have joined this boycott movement because no Indian has been taken in the commission and not because they refuse to acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to frame any constitution for

India or to determine her future status. By writing the Nehru Report the bourgeois leaders have acknowledged this right of the parliament. Therefore, it is for this that we find them every now and then urging for a Round-table Conference. The fact is that the Indian bourgeois leaders wish to share with British Capitalists the loot that is going on in this country and wish to substitute "Brown for white Bureaucracy" in which the masses will be fleeced as before.

The history of the Congress movement shows that the leaders have ever been ready to compromise with the British Government so that like the Englishmen they too might grow fat at the cost of the masses. I think this is the reason why they have never placed a revolutionary programme before the masses. In reality the big landlords and capitalists of India do not wish to break with the British because their interests are common. It is for this reason that they are submitting to the British dictatorship. But as the interests of the proletariat are opposed to those of the bourgeoisie they cannot accept this dictatorship.

Whatever the Commission may recommend for India in its final report, we are tasting its fruits even now. The first instalment of the Commission's benefits was the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, and the second was the beating of Pt. Jawaharlal and other leaders at Lucknow. Let us see what more we get. Besides this we have Public Safety Bill and Trade Dispute Bill. I think that those who even now refuse to boycott the commission are selling their country for a mess of pottage. We should condemn all these people in general and the nominated Labour representatives in particular who voted for co-operation with the Simon fraud in Indian Legislatures against the decision of the Trade Union Congress.

**NEHRU REPORT :** We had been hearing the word 'Swaraj' from the lips of the Congress leaders but we never understood its significance. This word has been so vaguely applied that one can make it mean anything one likes. To some it means Complete Independence to others Dominion Status. None had defined it so far, so no body was certain what our Congress



friends meant by it. Sometimes reactionaries manage, by jugglery of words, to pass as extremists. But time comes when they are revealed in their true colour. Many leaders had been posing as extremists under the cover of undefined Swaraj. But now that the Nehru Report has defined it, they are shown to be reactionaries. Not only do they wish to remain chained to chariot wheels of the Empire but they wish also to leave armed forces and Foreign Affairs in the British hands. Even in the Internal Affairs the powers of the Governor General are defined so vaguely that he can interfere in all matters whenever he likes.

In the case of the Indian States to say nothing of making wholesale changes they have proposed no reforms in the existing state of affairs. It means that the states will continue to be ruled by the reactionary and despotic princes, who are notorious the world over for their extravagant, luxurious and immoral ways of life. They have always been opposing the movement for India's liberty and are not prepared to give even a vestige of representation to the people. Many of the princes owe their states to their treachery of the country ; the way in which they suppressed the agrarian movements in their respective states can be condemned severely.

Lord Birkenhead had challenged the Indian leaders to frame a 'constitution' which would set forth their demands. The Nehru Committee took up the challenge and prepared the Nehru Report. This shows that the Indian leaders are prepared to co-operate with the British Government, but not for less than what the report contains. This report puts forth their minimum demands as they say, nothing less than which will make them co-operate with the British Government.

The Nehru Report is a class-constitution which betrays the interests of the proletariat. The framers of this constitution have looked to their own class rights and have totally neglected those of the masses. Even if we got the Swaraj defined in the Nehru Report the condition of the masses will not be changed in the least.

At every point in the report there have been devised

safeguards for the British Commercial interests, nor has there been any diminution in the plunder of the peasants by the landlords. The climax was reached when the Lucknow All-Parties Conference put their seal of approval on them leaving intact the vested interests. The resolution speaks for itself :

"All titles to private and personal property lawfully acquired and enjoyed at the establishment of the Commonwealth are hereby guaranteed."

The Indian landlords and the capitalists have been thus bribed to secure their co-operation up to the Dominion status defined in the report. These people have never stood by their country, but have always been playing the traitor. Many of these have been helping the Government in its policy of repression. To secure the co-operation of such people the Nehru Committee has sacrificed the masses. Their action appears to show that they do not wish to bring about an awakening among the masses, because they know that if the masses become conscious of their class-interests, they will not rest until these interests are made safe, and the people who suck their blood now are made to exit. This attitude explains the Bardoli resolution and the suspension of mass civil disobedience and No-tax campaign. The non-co-operation movement was given up for the leaders did not like that the peasantry should get rid of the tyranny of the landlords. Now one wonders if there was any necessity of passing the resolution guaranteeing the vested interests in this calm atmosphere.

Throughout the report emphasis has been laid on loyalty to the Empire. So far the fight has been confused. Our bourgeois leaders fighting for self-government obscured the fact that they were not fighting the Empire and Imperialism both. We must clear the air and put the issue definitely before India that we are out not only to end Imperialism but Empire as well. All Empires have proved to be curse everywhere; for they meant the exploitation of one country by another.

The presence of the King, the Governor-General and the Governor in the Nehru Scheme has made it all the more reactionary. They have taken great pains to prove that Dominion Status and Complete Independence are the same things, though in reality there can be no comparison between the two. "Dominion Status", declares the Report, "has come to mean something indistinguishable from Independence". Leaving aside all other defects can there be true independence as long as British interests flourish here? The flourishing of British interests means economic slavery for India. India will get true freedom only when the British interests are cleared away bag and baggage. The condition of affairs in Egypt and China has conclusively proved that as long as there are British interests in a country it can never be safe. Will the peaceful evolution recommended by the Nehru Committee ever succeed in clearing away these interests from the Indian soil? India can attain true liberty only through a revolution and not by framing constitutions.

The final authority and other discretionary powers in every matter that the Nehru Committee has decided to leave in the hands of the Governor-General makes meaningless the few good features of the report like the universal suffrage and fundamental rights. This constitution can never be acceptable to the peasantry who will agree to no constitution that does not safe-guard their interests as given below :

- (1) Reduction of land rent, so that persons earning less than Rs. 200/- per month be free from any payment.
- (2) Protection against the avarice of the money-lenders by legalising the maximum rate of interest @ 7% per annum.
- (3) Assistance by means of credit to the cultivators.
- (4) Land to the peasants and last but not the least cancelling all the vested rights by law.

For the industrial workers, in addition to the provisions made in the Nehru Report, the public utilities must be made the property of the nation, that is to say railways, telegraphs and waterways etc. must be run for the public use. The workers

should have a right to resort to mass-action and sympathetic strikes. Therefore, we should declare that unless these rights are acceded to, no constitution will be acceptable to the rank and file of the workers. It would have been better if, instead of framing a constitution, the leaders had framed a programme acceptable to the masses and had thus carried the fight for freedom to a finish.

**INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA LEAGUE :** But some people might say, "Why be so anxious? It is not only you who do not believe in Dominion Status, but there are many others too who are of the same opinion. This is why the Independence of India League has come into life." I wish to state our policy concerning this League. Because the Congress had done nothing for the good of the masses they were getting out of control so the conscious bourgeoisie have created this League in order to keep the masses under their influence. If we study the constitutions of this League and the I.N. Congress we do not find much difference in them, the only difference being that no persons holding communal views can join the League. But in our Workers' and Peasants' Party there is no room for communalists. The League has also declared that it will do nothing against the policy of the I. N. Congress, which means that it will safeguard the bourgeois interests. Some of its leaders not only openly declare their views against class-war but also cry hoarse for a Round-table conference and this shows them in their true colours. They support the Nehru Report and Complete Independence at the same time. This is ridiculous and shows how firm is their conviction for Complete Independence. Some of them go about declaring openly that if they pitched their demand at Complete Independence then alone they could hope to get Dominion Status. Under these circumstances how can we be certain that they will not lower the ideal of Independence? On the other side our party is carrying on an uncompromising Campaign for Complete Independence, our Workers' and Peasants' Party is an Independent party and our slogan is Complete Independence. Then what was the need of this new

party? All people who believe in revolution and class struggle should join our party and placing before the workers and peasants a revolutionary programme should organise them to win freedom.

And if they are unwilling to give up the League we shall see what programme and policy they adopt. If we are convinced that they are wholeheartedly bent upon achieving Independence, we shall be too glad to co-operate with them.

**TRADE UNION MOVEMENT :** At present the Trade Union Movement is in the hands of the reactionaries. It is led by persons belonging to the petty-bourgeoisie class. They want to limit this movement to economic fight and do not wish to let it meddle with politics. But until the economic fight is carried on to the political field no great advantage can accrue to the masses. Many persons have joined this movement simply that they may have an opportunity to go as labour representative to the International Labour Conference at Geneva and thus see Europe without spending a single pie from their pockets. I have taken part in the annual sessions of the Trade Union Congress. There resolutions are supported or opposed with the sole object of the speaker's desire to court notice which might ultimately send him to Geneva. Bustle and activity is confined to the sessions and during the rest of the year practically nothing is done towards organising labour. These words of mine do not allude to the few extremist Trade Unionists who do not wish to confine this movement only to the reduction of working hours and increase of wages and who are certain that as long as they hold their views they can never hope to be selected for the European trip; but to those who mean to make this movement a stepping stone to their career.

Trade Union movement has no militant policy. All power is spent on redressing minor grievances, most of its leaders keep aloof from politics. The defects of leadership have been clearly shown in the past strikes. So, our work consists in organising the workers and the peasants, so that after affiliating our organisations with the Trade Union

Congress, we might capture it. We must make this Congress an energetic and militant body, so that it may bring about emancipation of labour.

I wish to add a word about the Genève International. Experience has shown that this International can in no way prove beneficial to the working class, and the Congress representatives going there have neither done nor can do any good to the labour; because it is a mere trick to throw dust in the eyes of the proletariat, and thus put off the day of reckoning.

We should clearly declare that we have no confidence in this international, that we believe that it can do nothing to improve our lot, therefore we do not wish to have any connection with it direct or indirect.

**AFFILIATION QUESTION :** Now that capital is internationally organised and is suppressing the labour movement in all countries, it is essential that our movement should have international connections, for it is only by internationally organising ourselves that we can fight with the so organised Capital. And because means of communication have destroyed time and space and every part of the world has become so accessible, therefore we must of necessity affiliate ourselves to the International Movements.

I have been greatly pleased to see that the League Against Imperialism is trying to organise the revolutionary workers and the national movements of the colonial countries on international basis, and the importance of its propaganda work can be judged from the fact that the literature produced by it has been prescribed under the Sea Custom Act by the Government of India. Because the League is out to abolish Imperialism from the face of the earth and we too have the same objects, we should therefore have no objection to have connections with it. Personally I wish, that if practicable, we should secure affiliation with the International of Moscow or with the Peasants' International Kristentern, because these internationals are the real supporters of the political, economic and social emancipation of the proletariat and have

shown by their attitude that they have been unceasingly fighting against Capitalism and Imperialism. Besides, they honestly desire to organise the Trade Union Movements internationally. If our Party decides to seek affiliation with these Internationals, none will be more pleased than I.

And because in the Asiatic and Colonial countries matters are taking a serious turn, we should try to organise conferences in conjunction with the Trade Union Movements of these countries and should prepare a common programme to emancipate ourselves from the yoke of the blood sucking Imperialism. Therefore we should establish relations with the Pacific Trade Union Secretariat as well.

**BRITISH TRADE UNION CONGRESS:** The attitude of the British Trade Union Congress during the last few years has clearly shown that our Trade Union movement has been totally neglected by it and almost all of its leaders are diametrically opposed to India's attaining Complete Independence. But from the last year they have begun to make efforts to keep the Indian Trade Union movement under their influence and exploit it for imperialistic ends. The appointment of the Simon Commission has completely unmasked them and has shown that there is practically no difference between Baldwins and Macdonalds; on the other hand they are the chips of the same block. The Pillars of Imperialism like Mr. Baldwin, Sir Joynnson Hicks and Birkenhead on the one hand, the labour leaders like Mr. Macdonald and Co. on the other, all wish to exploit the cheap labour and raw materials of India for the benefit of Lancashire and, by investing huge capital in this country keep her ever in bondage. Therefore, it is that all British leaders Liberals, Conservatives and Laborites are all opposed to India's getting complete independence. We must not, in consequence, have any confidence in them. We should also keep in mind that the International Federation of Trade Union (Amsterdam) is a Capitalists' organisation; for it has always stood for European Capitalism and Imperialism and has ever been indifferent to the struggles of the oppressed countries for independence. In its past history it has clearly demonstrated

its inability to lead the militant and energetic Workers to their goal. We should, therefore, decide once for all that we should have nothing to do with it.

But we must have an official agent in Great Britain who may give to the British workers true information about the Indian Trade Union movement. In my opinion we should select The Workers' Welfare League of India, London, for this purpose, for it has proved by its activities its complete sympathy with the Indian workers' cause and its readiness to help them in their struggle.

**STRIKES :** There have taken place many strikes during the current year, which fact shows that there has been a great awakening among the industrial workers, and that they have begun to find it impossible to drag on existence in their present wretchedness. Therefore, they have begun to make efforts towards improving their lot. This increasing unrest among the workers and their desire to end the prevalent miserable conditions of life show which way the wind blows. Signs are not wanting to convince the workers that though they have met with failures in many strikes, still these very failures will prove stepping stones to victory, for learning from their past mistakes and shortcomings they will gird up their loins for a fresh grim and determined struggle which will help them towards their goal.

But here I may point out that the cause of failure of many strikes lay in the fact that the leadership was in the hands of such people who had their own axes to grind. Therefore they were always on the look out for a chance of compromise with exploiters and thus betray the workers leaving them in the lurch. We should therefore be on our guard to prevent such self-seekers from gaining influence in our ranks, for gaining this influence they will prove very injurious to our cause. We should expose them severely. Now that the workers are going to stand on their own legs, many wolves in sheep's fur will enter our movement and betray us at the eleventh hour.

I must add a word of praise for our Bombay comrades who



during mill strikes stuck to their guns with unsurpassed courage and determination facing hunger and want for their cause. Their fortitude and brave stand has earned praise of the enemies even, and if all of us would imbibe the spirit shown by them I am sure that we can bring about revolution in a very short time. It will be an act of ingratitude on our part to forget the help given by the Russian workers and our Indian friends. Without this timely help the Bombay workers would not have held out so long. We should thank the Soviet Government for infusing among the workers a desire to help their oppressed brethren abroad.

At the same time I raise a protest against the action of the Indian Government in having employed its police to open fire on the non-violent and unarmed workers in many places. We must end this state of affairs where human life is considered so cheap, as soon as possible. The firing on the workers in Bombay, Baman Gachi and the South Indian Railway where hundreds were wounded and killed, shows the Government's attitude towards strikes. On your behalf and mine I wish to express heartfelt sympathy for their bereaved families.

INDIAN LEGISLATURES : Uptil now the Government has been nominating labour representatives of their own choice, and therefore the latter have always stood by the Government even in opposition to the interests of the class which they were supposed to represent. Experience therefore shows that we must reject this system of nomination, and declare that the persons nominated by the Government are not our representatives.

We should once and for all decide that we shall have nothing to do with the imperialist Government and that he who co-operates with it will not be one of us. We should carry on continuous propaganda for universal adult suffrage, until our demand is acceded to, I shall take the liberty to suggest that at the time of elections we should put our programme before the public in general and the voters in particular, so that they may vote for one who agrees to

support their demands more than the rest. Thus we can get benefit from the elections too. I put forward this suggestion because of its propaganda and educational value. In my opinion we should take advantage of the elections in disseminating our ideals among the public.

**TRADE DISPUTE BILL :** The campaign carried on by the workers for the fulfilment of their demands have not only staggered the mill owners and capitalists but have shaken their friends and Government as well. Now the Employers and the Government are making a common cause to put obstacles in the way of the workers' organisations and do declare strikes to be illegal. This measure, if it becomes a law, will completely crush our Trade Union Movement. We should be on our alert and should carry on a whirlwind campaign against the passing of this law. We should clearly understand that if the proposed measure passes into law we shall not be safe and shall be unable to do anything for our salvation. If we do not succeed in rescinding this Bill, we shall find similar measures being devised to put down the agrarian movement when it raises its head. Thus the peasants' and workers' movement will be throttled.

Our party should carry on an unceasing agitation against this Bill and draw up a line of action to work upon. I suggest that we should organise demonstrations and protest meetings in different places and should prepare for a general strike to show our indignation against the proposed law. We should demand that every employed, whether in Government or private service, should be free to join Unions. We should, further agitate for fixing the minimum wage at Rs. 30/- and eight hours a day.

If this Bill becomes law, the workers in Railways, Telegraph, Postal Service, Public conservancy, on light and water supplies will be forbidden to resort to strikes, and the individuals absenting themselves will be fined and driven out. Besides we shall be deprived of our right to resort to sympathetic strikes and thus the whole movement will be crushed. Our movement is based on the principle that an injury to one

is an injury to all, but the Government does not wish to let us follow this principle. If the proposed Conciliation Boards and the Courts of Enquiry by Government come into being all movements will come to a stand still, because the Government will poke its nose everywhere at its sweet will, and thus cool the enthusiasm of the workers by putting off the matters till the Greek Calends. In short this Bill, from top to bottom, is opposed to the Labour interests and will be fatal to our movement.

We should also express our indignation against those reactionary labour leaders who have expressed their approval of the Bill, because while keeping a show of connection with the Trade Union Movement, they are betraying it. We must let the public know of the treachery of these people.

**PUBLIC SAFETY BILL :** The Government has contracted the whim that the strikes are due to Russian influence, but the fact is that the people have become sick of the miserable conditions of life. Besides the meagre wages, enormous fines and consistent insults at the hand of the employers have made them realise that they are not being treated like human beings. Therefore, they are fighting to keep up their self-respect and to better their conditions. But the Government thinks that these strikes are being engineered by Moscow or its agents. It does not know that a starving man will clutch at any thing. To save itself from Bolshevism, the Government introduced the Public Safety Bill in the last session of the Assembly, but it was defeated. Now it is again making preparations to introduce it once more in the Assembly and is exerting its utmost to influence the Assembly members in its favour. This Bill is not a Public Safety Bill ; but is in reality a Government Safety Bill. Because the days of Bureaucracy are numbered, and its prestige is gone, it is now trying to prolong its life by whatever means it can. This Bill gives so great discretionary powers to the Governor-General that he may deport and refuse admittance to any foreigner he likes. Such discretionary powers shall not be vested in a Government that does not depend for its life on the will of the people, and which is sure of its position

even if it may choose to misuse these powers. For the present the Bill is meant to deport Comrades Spratt and Bradley who are helping the Indian workers and peasants in their struggle, but after this another Bill will be introduced to deport without trial. This Bill if passed into law is an infringement on personal liberty and the Government will use it to the detriment of the Trade Union Movement.

**PEASANTS :** The real nation lives in huts and cottages in the villages, but none cares to improve their lot. We also spend most of our time in organising the industrial centres and pay little attention to bring about awakening among the peasants. The miserable condition of the peasants, like that of the industrial workers, is indescribable. Being underfed they are no better than walking skeletons. They have no good houses to live in and cannot get good clothes to wear. Interest, land rent, direct and indirect taxes have brought them to the verge of ruin, and the landlords' tyranny over them sends a shiver through one's body. The land is either in the hands of big landlords or princes and Mahants. Only the Punjab and some other places are free from this evil. These people continue to grow fat at the cost of the poor ryots who are daily wasting away and cannot resist the most ordinary attack of a disease even. Nor have they so much money as to enable them to call in medical aid. Therefore, it is that the peasants are meeting premature death in thousands like dogs and fleas. Their business is to work day and night and never taste the comforts of life in their everlasting struggle for existence. Here is a big army that can win freedom if we manage to awaken them to class-consciousness. But we should remember that the word Swaraj and freedom do not appeal to them because they do not understand what they mean and how their condition under Swaraj or freedom will be different from their present condition. They are obsessed with the idea that whether it be Swaraj or Independence, their lot will not improve a jot. That is the land-rent and the taxes which they pay the present Government will have to be paid to the Government that takes its place. Therefore, why should they care who rules over

them, for they are to be equally fleeced and made to remain miserable under all Governments. Therefore, it is that the Congress Committees and Volunteer corps have so short life in rural areas. We should place before them a programme containing their immediate demands and they should be made to understand how their condition will improve under a free Government. If they were convinced that their burden of land rent will be considerably lightened under the Swaraj Government they would be saved from the clutches of the money-lenders and the land will be so distributed as to lead to their prosperity, they will be ready to make any and every sacrifice to win freedom, and whoever places a programme of this kind before them will secure their co-operation. It is our party that alone can place such a programme before them. Therefore, we should convey our message to them, and should put in greater efforts to organise them. They wait for us, only workers are needed to call them forth. If we go to them like brother they are sure to hear us with interest and come under our flag.

The policy of the Government at present is that the land should remain or should go into the hands of the capitalists or landlords so that raw materials may be produced on a greater scale for the benefit of Great Britain. Therefore it is that instead of giving arable land to the peasants, it sells it to the highest bidder, who then leases it to the peasants.

Because of overpressure on land many of the peasants are losing their work and thus unemployment is rampant among them; so that they are forced to seek means of subsistence in mills, on motor lorries etc. Our war cry should be 100% organisation. The Akali movement has proved what organisation can achieve. It is not impossible to organise the peasants if we place a suitable programme before them as hinted above.

We should condemn those members of the Indian Legislatures who have supported Government measures intended to harm the interests of the peasants.

**BARDOLI :** The peasants have again and again tried to better their lot but every time their efforts have been baffled by the combined action of the Government and the

landlords. Neither there has been sufficient awakening among them nor have they been properly led. This is why they have never achieved success. The peasants all over India are being crushed under the weight of taxes, and land rent, but the Government is increasing this burden day by day. These poor people do protest against this oppression but being unorganised, their voice is not effective.

In Bardoli there was an increase of land rent by 1 lac in 1925. The peasants were too poor to pay even the former rent but this additional weight proved the last straw that breaks the camel's back. They raised a voice of protest against this oppression, they submitted applications for remission, put questions in the Legislatures through their representatives and tried every possible means to mend this wrong, but their cries fell on deaf ears. At last they were forced to decide upon the non-payment of the increased rent. They stuck to this decision. Their land was attached, their property was confiscated and they were put in prison, but nothing daunted them. The bravery and fortitude that they have shown is worthy of great praise. But it has to be said with sorrow that they were not properly led. I know that now that Mr. Patel has been lauded to the skies by bourgeois India, to decry him will be thought to be a strange thing. But the fact is that even in spite of so heavy sacrifices the peasants have not profited much. The land rent was already so high that the people had been prepared for mass action and no-tax campaign. But Mr. Patel contented himself with an impartial enquiry. Where as their least demand should have been that they would not pay the increased rent and would never let it increase. Now if the committee decides in favour of an increase in rent which most probably it will do the Ryots will have no choice but to pay it. Thus all their sacrifices and suffering will prove useless. We believe that as long as the present system continues there can be no hope of the betterment of the workers' and peasants' condition. For this reason we shall have to end this evil system, and all this can be brought about by a

revolution alone. Therefore, in order to prepare the peasants for a revolution we should place before them a programme based on their immediate needs of life ; and organising them in this way prepare them for the battle of freedom.

**THE COMING WAR :** To say that preparations are being made for war is wrong, because they were complete long ago. Now we are to hear the news of its outbreak. There is international chaos. Trade rivalries have increased, but Great Britain has specially prepared herself for a war and we cannot say when a war might break out. All peace pacts, Geneva meetings and disarmament proposals are not to outlaw war but to throw dust in the eyes of the unwary world. In reality under cover of these proposals every nation is preparing for human slaughter and Secret Treaties are being signed. This shows the extent to which mutual mistrust has increased, and the efforts that are being made to plunge the world in another devastating war.

The world is passing through a crisis. On the one side are the people who seek to keep intact the existing order of things based on private property rights and to maintain in their present form Capitalism and its higher form Imperialism. On the other the people who feel that the present organisation of society is unjust and tyrannical, and until this is broken up and replaced by a new, better socialist system, the condition of the poor cannot be improved. Thus these two schools of thought have ranged themselves in opposing files.

Russia and Great Britain are the representatives of these war preparations. Russia stands for liberty, equality and fraternity and Britain for Capitalism and Imperialism, which means exploitation. A great rivalry exists between them. Russia does not want war in reality, not she can gain by a war. But her existence means a message of revolution to the poor workers and peasants all over the world. As long as the Russian Bolshevic Government exists it will be a beacon light for the revolutionaries the world over. The people will imbibe revolutionary and communist ideas and will try by every possible means, to overthrow the existing order of things. But the

Imperialist Government wish to crush the Soviet rule and replace it by one of their own kind and thus give a set back to the socialist movement all over the world. For this reason it is that the Imperialist countries, especially Great Britain, are trying to destroy Russia. Russia has been forced in self-defence to prepare for a war.

Our attitude is clear. We, who believe in International labour unity, cannot tolerate that before our very eyes millions of our brethren be sacrificed to the demon of Imperialism. As soon as the war begins, we should resort to mass strikes, sabotage, and hartals and boycott and by paralysing the means of transport harass the enemy in the rear. The path is fraught with difficulties, but men of our way of thinking are left with no other choice. Therefore, when the enemy is busy in war we should adopt such tactics as will put him between two fires. The workers and peasants should not hesitate to make any sacrifice at that time, because that will be the opportune time to destroy British imperialism.

**OUR ENEMIES :** Our enemies have begun to discredit us in many ways and alienate public sympathy from us by their malicious propaganda in the press and on the platform, so that they may easily arrest and confine us. They doubt us as Bolshevics and Communists and the likes, but we must not lose heart. Is it not a matter of pride to be called a Bolshevik? Because Bolshevik is one who replaces the present rotten order of things by a new and just system, in which the wealth is distributed justly where there are no poor and no rich classes, where there is no unemployment, in which there is an end of the ruler and the ruled, oppressor and the oppressed, employer and the employee, landlord and peasant, where every one is prosperous and gets all he needs, where all live a happy and prosperous life.

To speak my mind freely I am working to bring about such an order of things and because the Bolshevics of Russia have shown us the way in this respect, we are thankful to them. If our enemies call us Bolshevics, we accept the epithet, because we know that Bolshevism stands for liberty, equality, and fraternity.



**NEED OF CENTRAL ORGANISATION :** So far our parties have been working in their respective provinces and I am glad to see that in almost all cases our point of view has been the same. In our respective provinces we have gained power that is to count with. But in thus working province-wise not only is there a danger of differences rising among us but also there is disadvantage of our power being divided. By uniting all parties into one central body we shall acquire a power that will carry weight. This central body has long been overdue, but we have not been able to co-ordinate our activities so far. Now we should thank those of our Calcutta comrades who with great labour and at great expense have called this All India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference and have given us an opportunity to understand and co-operate shoulder to shoulder with one another. I am sure that this organisation of ours will prove very beneficial to the country and will shorten the life of our bondage.

I make bold to suggest that in order to place our viewpoint before the country and to educate our members we should start a weekly organ, for this will keep us in touch with the work going on in different provinces. Besides many persons who misunderstand us will come to know our ideas and aims and have sympathy for us.

**TASKS OF THE PARTY :** Now a question arises that our bourgeois leaders are retreating by inches and are prepared to seek compromise with the British Government, at any cost and are thus leaving the masses in this miserable condition. This proves clearly that the problem of the country's freedom has not been solved. But the condition of the masses has grown so wretched that to remain any longer under British yoke means death to them. They cannot wait long, therefore they urgently need solution of their troubles. What should that solution be?

If we study the history of our parties, we shall learn that in every Province their origin was due to the dissatisfaction with bourgeois leadership. Secondly, the Muslims that had left India because of Khilafat question,

on their return brought communist ideas with them from Russia. They had seen there what great changes that revolution had wrought there in the masses. These were the reasons that they along with others were forced to form a party separate from the Indian National Congress. They co-operated with the Congress as far as their principles allowed them, but in cases where the Congress advised for a backward policy they worked independently. Unlike the bourgeois leaders they did not say "Let us get the masses on our side", but they said "Let us be on the side of the masses". Because of this the masses soon began to look to these persons for leadership.

Throughout my address I have been explaining our programme but a few points need special emphasis :

First, that whatever our programme may be, it should be based on class struggle. We should work for 100% organisation, we must see that all our members become class-conscious and know their goal and how to reach it. Besides, we shall have to educate them with the necessity of unceasing war against the exploiter, for without these tactics it is difficult to win economic freedom. We, must again face the bourgeois reformist leaders who have betrayed many strikes and Agrarian Movements. We should encourage hartals and strikes.

Secondly, our watchword should be Complete Independence and we should declare from house tops that we are not prepared to come to terms until and unless we achieve Complete Independence. Besides this we should carry on an active propaganda to call a constituent assembly where representatives will be sent by universal adult suffrage. This assembly will frame a programme for the masses, because All Parties Conference has failed to safe-guard the interest of all and has proved to be an agent of the Capitalists.

Thirdly, we should include in our programme the abolition of Landlordism and the Indian States. And we should propagate for distributing the wealth justly, because this

just demand appeals strongly to the masses and will help us in organising them soon.

Fourthly, we should look sharp to secure International affiliations with all those parties who are bent upon destroying Imperialism

Fifthly, we should try our level best to disseminate our ideas among the young men, because they are ever ready to give up old rotten ideas and imbibe the fresh and healthy ones. Besides youngmen are full of energy and enthusiasm and these are the qualities that will stand us in good stead.

Sixthly, we should carry on an active propaganda against the coming war and should preach among the masses not to supply recruits and other assistance to the Government if war comes about.

Last, but not the least, I remind you once again to look to your organisation and solidarity of rank and file.

COMRADES IN JAIL : Before I conclude my address I remind you of those comrades who are rotting in Jails for disseminating their views. At present Fazili Ilahi Qurban is imprisoned for three years and Md. Akbar Khan Quraishi for ten years. How Mr. Campbell was deported from this country, is well known to all.

In addition to these, in all other countries our comrades are receiving a very hard treatment at the hands of the Imperialists. But we should remember that pioneers in every age and clime had to suffer in the same way for their new ideas and ideals. There is nothing to fear for it is nature's will that such men should suffer, so that public attention may be drawn to them. Therefore, we should unceasingly fight to bring about the happy common wealth of toil that is to be.

"There amidst the world new builded will our earthly deeds abide.

Though our names be all forgotten and the tale of how we died."

CONCLUSION : I have taken a good deal of your precious

time a few words more and I have done. The age through which we are passing is the age of democracy. I do not want to be a prophet, but I say that the present century will see Socialism and Communism, governing the world, Kingship will wholly vanish from the surface of the earth. Mussolinis that are now oppressing the poor and helpless human-ity will be wiped off the world. Empires and Imperialism will cease and the present rotten and unjust system will give way to a new and just system in which the dignity of man and labour will be proclaimed and where all men will be truly equal, free and prosperous. This so called civilisation will be no more, because in it the real earners are deprived of their bread earned by the sweat of their brows and where man is exploited by man.

This civilisation will yield place to such an other where the governing principle will be "he who does not work, neither shall he eat."

Real democracy where 100% are represented has never been established. The people who declare democracy to have failed even before its full advent are in reality the supporters of Mussolinis. We should fight for the establishment of true democracy. Neither will there remain laws which rob the poor and weak of their lawful earnings and which have been made simply to protect property rights of the strong and rich.

Their place will be taken by such laws as will stop exploitation of man by man will banish poverty from off the face of the earth, and will supply everyone with work.

Let us, comrades, then fight to bring about such a beautiful order of things. But all this cannot be achieved without revolution, for a revolution is the only friend of the poor and the helpless. It is revolution alone that can bring real brotherhood and Liberty to mankind. Let us then all sing :

"Arise ye prisoners of starvation  
Arise ye wretched of the earth  
No more tradition chain shall bind you  
Arise ye slaves no more in thrall

For justice thunders condemnation  
A better world is in birth  
The earth shall rise on new foundation  
Ye have not been ye shall be all  
Then comrades come rally  
And the last fight let us face  
The International Shall be the human race

Long live the Proletarian Revolution  
Long live the Soviet Rule  
Long live Marxism and Leninism.  
Long live the solidarity of the exploited  
People of the earth  
Long live the Workers and Peasants Party  
of India.''

### **B. ADDRESS OF WELCOME\***

Comrades,

Before proceeding with our solemn and urgent task my first and foremost duty is to utter a few words of welcome to those who have come here to help us in our arduous duty. It is my unique privilege as the Chairman of the Reception committee to welcome you in the name of the peasants and workers and all exploited classes of Bengal. We are really fortunate to have you here and your help in deliberations.

We hope you will make this First Conference of ours a success. The workers and peasants of Bengal are proud to know that you so willingly accepted their invitation. To-day is the beginning of a great and eventful era in India, and you are its makers and pioneers. I, on behalf of the Reception Committee, welcome you once again.

\* By P. DINDA (*Bar-at-Law*) Chairman, Reception Committee of the First All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference, December 21 (1928)

We have assembled here to-day because we have realised now that our task is not confined to affairs of provincial origin alone. Being placed in the same sort of circumstances our cause is an All India one. Looseness of our relations and activities of scattered bodies are the strength of our opponents. That is why we are here to discuss current affairs and make resolutions in common.

1. The recent strikes clearly proved the impotence of the Indian Trade Union Congress as it is constituted now. The attitude of its leaders towards the working class movement is more of the nature of philanthropy than anything else. Our duty is to give it an impetus on totally different lines. Our direct action will be aimed at establishing democracy in industry, but will always be opposed to any suggestion of class collaboration.

2. There are people in the working class movement who ridicule the theory of class struggle. No amount of spiritualism can upset that theory. We can be just as materialistic as any other people of the world. The Congress leaders in season and out of season speak loudly that they stand principally for the oppressed masses of India. But the members of the Congress party in the Bengal Legislative Council vigorously opposed and put all sorts of troubles on the way of passing the measures which were going to give to the cultivators a ridiculously meagre amount of freedom of enjoyment of land. The members of the Council forgot their party divisions and got themselves united to preserve their class interests.

3. Social-Democrats in our midst who believe that a compromise between Capital and Labour can be arrived at and worked for the betterment of the masses, will kindly see how in the recent strikes of the Calcutta scavengers the Corporation authorities did not observe the sacredness of an agreement. Some of the Councillors who put on the garb of poverty to gain popularity amongst the simple-minded people opposed any concessions to the sweepers. For they are the rate payers. They must protect their own class.

4. Peasants are very much hard hit. They are subject to any amount of oppression. They are within the whims of the landlords and in the clutches of usurers. They are intoxicated by opium doses administered by priests. While idle Zamindars and Talukdars live upon poor cultivators' earning and spend their hard-earned money in the gay life of the metropolis, the toilers in the countryside are spending their sweated days penniless, homeless and without food, clothes and education. To save them from their economic distress we must fight hard, for we know that the Indian masses mainly consist of them. Land which they cultivate but do not own, like air and sea belongs to society.

5. The immediate future of the working class movement is full of struggles. The Trade Disputes Bill and the Public Safety Bill are really meant to suppress the working class movement before it passes out of its infancy. Those bills along with some others will again be introduced in the Legislature. The Indian Capitalists will not lag behind their foreign brothers in realising the importance and urgency of those bills. The recent utterance of the Chairman of the Scindia Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. tends to prove it. In course of time Indian and foreign capitals both will combine for their safety and to exploit labour and natural resources with greater ease and freedom. Therefore, our fight will be directed not only to the foreign capital but also against Indian capital.

6. It is a pity that our youngmen of the middle class have developed a false and queer sense of prestige. They loathe to identify themselves with the cause of the workers and peasants, although they suffer equally under the capitalist system of society. They are ill-fed, ill-educated and unemployed. They are patriotic. But patriotism alone will not give them a decent living. In independent countries where the capitalist system of society exists, the able-bodied and educated young people of their class are unemployed and oppressed. Our youngmen fail to see it. They should discard that notion of prestige and make a common cause with the working classes.

7. Internationally our position is worse. We go to sections of the working class movement from which we get little help. We are not ready to make common cause with those who recognise us. We should go to those for help who have developed class consciousness. For they are the people who stand for humanity at large and do not believe in political boundaries and the institution of Empire. They are the only people who recognise the India of Workers and Peasants. They receive our delegates and are always ready to send theirs. In our struggles they are with us.

8. We have often seen, how the man-power of Indian masses was used to satisfy the greed of an Imperial power. Soldiers maintained out of the Indian Revenue were sent out to China though Indians objected to such a course.

In the last Afghan war our soldiers fought against the Afghans simply because Afghanistan wanted Independence. Who suffered most and gained nothing? It is the working class; for the army consist of them. If workers and peasants refuse to become instruments of war against the independence of their fellow-brothers of other lands, India will soon gain her freedom. So our nationalist brothers should recognise the rights of workers and peasants in society and they in return will get the help of a force which can withstand any number of shells from guns and bullets from rifles.

9. The Nehru Report, we must say, is a failure from our workers' and peasants' point of view.

Associations and Combinations are allowed as they are now by law. It will be no criminal offence to declare a strike or help the strikers. So far the Nehru Report is not much of an improvement.

Even it does not give sufficient guarantee to a general strike that it will not be liable to offend the principles of criminal law. If it gives the workers and peasants nominal political rights it does not insure their economic freedom. It does not put any limitations to the power of the rich. The rich will remain free as before to blackmail the poor. The



Report recommends Adult Suffrage. It is not of much use in the capitalist system of society. The unlimited monetary resources of the rich will frustrate its utility.

Poverty will be taken advantage of by the rich candidates. Voters will be bought over else they will have to face terrible consequences.

Peasants, we are told, will have a fixed tenure. That is a good start. But the Report recommends no protection against the force and extortion of the Zemindars and Talukdars.

On the contrary, it protects the interest of those who are now in possession of their ill-gotten rights and titles on land. For it says "All titles to private and personal property lawfully acquired and enjoyed at the establishment of the Commonwealth, are hereby guaranteed." Besides the class of tenureholders may include capitalists and employees of labour. How can it be possible to improve the hard lot of peasants or establish their rights on land unless and until land is nationalised ?

10. Communalism spreads among the workers and peasants more rapidly than among the middle classes. Priests prosper well among them. They destroy the faculty of reasoning in the minds of the masses. The ignorant working classes are very credulous to believe in their explanations about the mysteries of life and consequences of sins. Thus faith being established in their minds, the priests start to exploit it to serve their own purposes. They make a living out of it. They are parasites of our society. Priests are the people who are always ready to help the rich. As soon as they are suppressed and prevented from living their parasitical lives, communalism will disappear like magic.

11. The Independence resolution of the National Congress is not new to our movement. We demand it more vehemently than many others. Our idea of Independence is different from that of the Congress. We want both

political and economic independence. When we say economic independence, we mean independence of the masses. By political independence we mean the recognition of political rights of workers and peasants. We do not want a French Revolution over here. For it will not render the conditions of the masses any better.

12. The states of out feudal lords commonly called Ruling-Chiefs must be vigorously attacked. The working class movement is very backward in those parts of India. The chiefs' power is absolutely autocratic. Their power to play with the lives of the poor is unlimited. Hearths and homes are very insecure. Poverty is extreme in those states. Famine is a matter of course. Communalism is rampant. At regular intervals the gay chiefs visit the capitals of Europe and there squander the blood-stained money of the people of their states in dances, big parties, shooting excursions, race horses and other immoral purposes. Their freedom to live this kind of life has never been questioned. Still they want more, and for that purposes some of them have gone to England to do propaganda work in the British Press. They will dwindle down before the onslaught of the movement of the masses.

13. The position of the women must be fully taken into consideration. Unless we make them free economically, our movement will not succeed. The economic dependence has forced some of them to lead a life of shame. We must enlist their sympathy in our cause and recognise their rights as equal to ours. Religiously biased people think that women are meant for inferior tasks of life. We ask them to look at the position of women in Russia at the present moment. Womenfolk over there have been helping to solve the intricate and complex problems of state. They are found just as fit to work as their comrades of the other sex.

Comrades, this is the state of things in India. You must realise where we stand. You are invited here to discuss and consider resolutions which will direct our thoughts and

guide our future activities. I do not know whether you will agree with me or not, but I think and fully believe that if we succeed in achieving the following points our constructive as well as propaganda work will be much strengthened:

1. We must have an All-India central organisation with provincial branches.

2. That organisation must have definite principles with no room for ambiguity.

3. The central organisation will be affiliated to the League against Imperialism.

4. For our young comrades an All-India Young Comrades' League should be started.

5. For propaganda and publicity work an organ should be published by the central body.

6. If financial help is forthcoming we should have a school of politics to train the workers in the cause, in the principles of the working class movement.

7. To help us constantly in our propaganda work and in other matters it is very necessary to have a Research Department attached to the central body.

8. If you do not think it unnecessary, it is better to have a separate organisation for our women comrades.

9. If we get ourselves ready in the meantime and you agree to the proposal, it is worth while to fight elections for the Councils and to local bodies.

Having taxed your patience so far, I do not like to take your time any more. You are expecting something much better, and you will soon get it. Only one word I shall add. Comrades, there is no royal road to success. Dark and full of thorns is the path leading to it. But our courage must be dauntless and our resolution firm.

### C. POLITICAL RESOLUTION\*

The political situation in the past year, while conforming generally to the lines described a year ago, has undergone important developments. The following are its main features:

(1) Continuance of the firm policy of Imperialism towards the bourgeois nationalist movement, and increasingly reactionary attitude towards the masses.

(2) Consequent retreat of almost all parties of the bourgeois, including the Congress, in support of a timid liberal programme of constitutional demands, and communal reconciliations.

(3) Considerable increase in the strength and militancy of the mass movement, workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie.

(4) An effort on the part of a wing of the bourgeoisie to threaten imperialism with the mass movement, and at the same time to regain the control over the petty bourgeoisie and the masses which they are losing.

1. The provocative and apparently stupid policy of British Imperialism is indicated by the increasing difficulty of its position in the world. The approach of war, and the continued economic decline of Great Britain, render it imperative for imperialism to keep its political control and economic predominance in India undisturbed. But this is becoming increasingly difficult, as the shortage of an exportable surplus of British capital tends to deprive the British interests of an important weapon used in maintaining their economic leadership. Increasing recourse must therefore be had to the political weapon, and the British political dictatorship has been used to force through the rupee ratio, the all British commission on constitutional reforms, etc. and is expected to enforce the Reserve Bank bill in spite of the strenuous opposition of practically the whole forces of the bourgeoisie.

\* Submitted to the First All India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference, December, 1928.

At the same time the appointment of the Butler Committee and the statements of the leading loyalist Princes show that serious steps are being taken by imperialism to safeguard its position by strengthening hold on the States and increasing their military efficiency.

But the difficulties of British Imperialism also determine that its fundamental economic and political line of policy in India shall be maintained. It is British Imperialist policy to industrialise India in co-operation with Indian capital, though in such a way that British predominance is maintained. The policy of concessions is still pursued, as is shown by the continued grant of tariffs to predominantly Indian firms and industries. Similarly the basic policy of compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie on the political field is to be maintained, and even concessions to be granted, provided that effective British control is absolutely secure. Thus the memorandum to the Simon Commission of the European Association suggests an increase in the nominated and government seats in the assembly, addition to the powers of the provincial legislatures, but no widening of the franchise, some concessions to the bourgeoisie—none to the masses—but increase in the power of British control at the centre. Further the respectful attitude of officials and of all responsible sections of the Anglo-Indian and British Imperialist press towards the Nehru Report, testifies to an anxiety to compromise. The unexpected aggressiveness of Imperialism does not therefore imply a fundamental change in its policy towards the Indian bourgeoisie, but only a partial and probably temporary modification. The essential line of policy remains the same.

2. Before the firmness of the Government the bourgeoisie have again retreated. Their natural indignation and the pressure of the masses after the appointment of the Simon Commission drove them towards an uncompromising attitude, in the case of the Congress leaders to support of the Independence Resolution and the approval of hartals on the arrival of the Commission. But later, when the All Parties

Conference was convened and the bourgeois left wing had to choose between the masses and their class they chose the latter. The attitude of the Government impressed many with the fact that nothing was to be gained by declamation or threat. There was left no alternative but a united front of the bourgeoisie, on the basis of practical constitutional possibilities. All the bourgeois parties, under the same compulsion, dropped their political and communal differences and put forward a reasonable proposal for compromise with imperialism in the Nehru Report.

The Nehru Report, as accepted by the All Parties Conference, makes the following principal demands: (1) Complete responsibility for an Indian Parliament elected by universal suffrage, in regard to internal affairs, including finance, customs, taxation etc. (2) Rights of the individual of a bourgeois democratic type, including a special safeguard of private property rights, but including also some freedom for Trade Union organisation, etc,

In return it concedes: (1) Foreign affairs to be conducted on the same basis as those of the dominions. (2) Executive powers nominally vested in the king, acting through nominated Governor-General and Governors, (3) No discrimination against British financial, commercial and industrial interests. (4) The armed forces to be under the control of a committee consisting partly of ministers and partly of British officers. (5) Existing pay etc. of present civil and other officers to be guaranteed, their resignation voluntary. (6) Indian states remain under their present regime, but in relations with the Indian Government.

The masses thus enter into the programme hardly at all. In the states they are left at the mercy of the princes. In British India they are given the vote, personal rights, a certain protection for trade unions, primary education, some vaguely-worded promises in regard to economic improvement, and security of tenure of land, the landlord system being otherwise retained.

The report is entirely a bourgeois-democratic scheme,

of a not very advanced type, and in relation to imperialism constitutes almost the minimum which the Indian bourgeoisie could demand. Its acceptance means a decisive retreat on the part of the Congress leaders from the position taken by them a year before, and represents a consolidation of the whole bourgeois class, on the basis of reconciliation of minor differences, the complete acceptance of imperialism, and a minimum programme of demands, into a single reactionary bloc, completely divorced from the masses.

The retreat of the bourgeoisie from its position of would be leader of the masses, is shown also by: (1) Its betrayal of the Bardoli peasants' resistance to increase of assessment. (2) Its practical neglect of and even opposition to the numerous mass workers' strikes which have occurred this year. (3) The half-hearted and formal opposition expressed to the extremely dangerous and reactionary Trade Disputes Bill. (4) the conduct of the Bengal Congress Council party in connection with the Bengal Tenancy Law Amendment Bill, in which on practically every issue they supported the zamindars against the cultivators, frequently voting with the Government.

3. While the bourgeoisie as a whole have been retreating, the masses, including a large section of the petty bourgeoisie, have been making noteworthy advance. The workers' movement, which has been rising slowly for some time, has reached a level of activity and militancy which has not been attained for six or seven years past. Most disputes have been characterised by (1) extreme obstinacy and prolongation; the resort by the capitalist to all devices of intimidation and deceit to break the workers' strength, which however has in most cases been maintained with remarkable courage and endurance. (2) the active participation of the state forces on the capitalist side; wholesale arrests, prohibition of meetings, forcible entry into workers' houses, beating, etc. (3) a consequent tendency in some cases for the workers to emancipate themselves from the ideology of the old-style bourgeois leaders, and to acquire class-consciousness and

an attitude of struggle against both the employer and the state. The political consciousness of the leading sections of the workers has substantially increased. And at the same time the base of the movement is broadening; several disputes have occurred in previously unorganised industries.

The basic conditions which bring about this movement, viz trade depression and an employers' offensive, rising prices, and a gradual spread of knowledge of the workers' movement and of revolutionary ideas, continue to operate. In spite, therefore, of some setbacks and local demoralisation, the progress of the movement is likely to go on without serious intermission for some time.

There has also been a less marked, but important, advance in the peasants' movement. Actual campaigns against landlords or Government have occurred or are threatened from Bombay, Madras, U. P. and Bengal; mostly defensive, but one or two actually taking the offensive; while several workers' and peasants' conferences have been held in different provinces.

Some sections of the petty bourgeoisie have manifested increased activity, as is shown by the constant growth and activity of the youth-movement, the enthusiastic acceptance almost everywhere in the organisations, and in Congress meetings etc., of the slogan of Independence, and the tendency, given expression though not yet much realised in practice, to take up mass organisation.

In response to the growth of the mass movement especially of its leading section, the workers, the Government in addition to its practical repressive measures, has taken serious steps. It has brought forward a Trade Disputes Bill, of which the most important proposals are to penalise heavily all strikes with a political complexion, and to prevent all strikes in railways and other services, thus cutting off from the movement its largest and hitherto most active and best organised section. Further, by means of the Public Safety Bill, steps are taken to cut the feeble connection between the international revolutionary labour movement and the



Indian workers. In addition increased efforts are being made through the I. F. T. U and the British Trades Union Congress to support and strengthen the reactionary leaders of the unions.

4. The publication of the Nehru Report, which by its frankness and moderation revealed the true nature and aims of bourgeois nationalism, brought about a crisis within the Congress ranks. The hypocrisy of the bourgeois nationalist propaganda for some time past, especially of its support of complete independence, was very clearly shown. It was feared that the petty bourgeoisie, whose enthusiasm has been greatly roused by the slogan of independence, would withdraw support in disgust. At the same time the rapid rise of the workers' movement impressed many with its power, and with its danger for the bourgeoisie. It was clearly seen to be emancipating itself from the control of the old type of moderate bourgeois labour leader.

Accordingly, the Independence for India League was launched, and rapidly found support among the bourgeois politicians, although its policy, not yet formulated in detail, must mean nothing short of mass revolution if taken seriously. There was even some talk of revolution and of socialism. The possibility arose of a serious breach in the ranks of the bourgeoisie if such wild talk were allowed to continue, even if only for purposes of demonstration, before the masses and the petty bourgeoisie, whose psychology it fitted so well. A halt was therefore called by the Bengal group, who published independently and in advance of the general body, a suggested programme, clearly with the object of forcing the hand of the All India League, and confining independence propaganda to harmless bourgeois lines.

The programme and manifesto published by the Bengal Independence for India League, while using phrases such as "economic emancipation", "removal of economic inequalities", and "rousing the masses", contains nothing totally unacceptable to the more moderate wing of the bourgeoisie. The section on political democracy contains nothing but the

~~demand~~ for complete independence and that on social de-  
~~mands~~ *many familiar items of social reform propaganda. The*  
~~demands~~ *demands include for workers, the eight hour day*  
*for factory workers, unemployment pay, sickness insurance*  
*pensions, etc., and control of the rate of interest on loans*  
*and supply of cheap credit by co-operative institutions. In*  
*connection with industry it is proposed to nationalise the key*  
*industries, railways, shipping, and air services, to introduce*  
*compulsory arbitration, profit sharing, and labour participa-*  
*tion in management. Taxation on private capital, including*  
*inheritance duties are also proposed.*

This is a programme not intended to rouse the revolutionary energy of the masses in pursuit of their economic demands, but is calculated to bring Indian industrialism into line with modern bourgeois practice, including its methods of keeping the workers under control. It is essentially a programme for the bourgeoisie, in which items are included not as demands by the workers, but as promises of what will be done for them by the bourgeoisie when bourgeois independence is established, so that the independent workers' movement may be held in check. In particular it has no revolutionary significance at all.

Even more reactionary is the programme in connection with the land, in which the chief items are annulment of agricultural indebtedness and abolition of landlordism, by indemnification. This item provides a very clear indication that the Independence League intends on break with the Congress, which in Bengal is notoriously influenced by landowning interests but is on the contrary more in fundamental agreement with the general line of Congress policy.

The unreal and hypocritical character of the programme is perhaps most definitely revealed by the fact that throughout there is not a word mentioned of the method by which the aims are to be achieved.

The programme is quite in line in its counter-revolutionary character with the usual propaganda of its leaders (cf.

**Presidential Speech of Mr. S. C. Bose at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, 1928, in which the class struggle (is definitely opposed) and with their conduct in connection with labour disputes. In more than one strike the efforts of the Independence League leaders have been directed towards stopping the strikes in the interest of a national industry. Some leaders of the school do not hesitate to avow themselves Fascists.**

Although The Bengal League represents a moderate wing in relation to some other sections, the nature of the League as a whole is fundamentally the same. This is shown by (1) The personnel of the leading groups, the members of the All Parties Conference who signed the initial manifesto and the decision to make the League a wing of the National Congress only. No section or group which is loyal to Congress principles can really lead the masses. Congress aims are nationalist and opposed to class struggle. The mass movement can only grow by waging the class struggle. To confine the League membership to Congress members means in effect to exclude the masses. (2) The action of most of the members in supporting simultaneously the Independence League and the Nehru Report "except for Dominion Status". The whole Report depends upon Dominion Status, that is compromise with imperialism, as its basis, and its provisions are quite incompatible with any attainable independence. (3) The repeated hint that if independence is advocated, Dominion Status may be granted as a compromise, (4) The failure of almost all the propagandists of the League to treat the matter seriously. They appear to think that a mere sentiment in favour of independence is sufficient qualification for membership of the League and the propaganda of this sentiment is its whole work. The practical revolutionary implications of independence are neglected almost entirely.

The Independence for India League is thus to be looked upon as the resultant of different tendencies : (1) A hesitating

and as yet confused move on the part of a section of the petty bourgeoisie towards revolutionary policy with perhaps on the part of some of the idea of exploiting the revolutionary mass movement for the attainment of independence for the middle classes. (2) An attempt by a section of the bourgeoisie to extort concessions from imperialism by threatening it with a movement for independence among the middle classes and the masses. (3) An attempt by a section of the bourgeoisie to regain that control over the mass movement and the petty bourgeoisie which the increasingly reactionary attitude of the bourgeois class as a whole, and of the bourgeois labour leaders is causing it to lose.

In conditions of rising mass movement, the Workers' and Peasants' Party has (1) to assist the growth of the movement to the utmost, (2) to clarify its very confused ideas, and (3) to improve its organisation especially that of the working class vanguard of the movement, and to widen and strengthen the Party.

For the first purpose it is necessary to establish united front with all organisations which tend to increase the momentum of the movement, whether of the workers, or of the peasants or of the petty bourgeoisie. But for the remaining purposes it is essential to insist more strongly than has been done previously upon the independent role of the Workers and Peasants' Party, as the only organisation which has a correct policy and can unite to lead all the mass revolutionary forces of the country. The party can be content no longer to act primarily as a section or wing of another organisation. It is the only genuine representative of the rising mass movement.

The developments of the past year bring the relations between the Workers' and Peasants' Party on the one hand and the National Congress with its independence wing on the other, to a new stage. The gradual divergence between the masses and the bourgeoisie, which had been making itself manifest for some years past, has sharpened decisively. The

bourgeoisie as a whole has retreated, and that section which has not done so, maintains its advanced position more and more obviously for tactical reasons only. On the other hand the masses have advanced considerably. The appropriate expression of the old relations between the movements, was that the Workers' and Peasants' Party constituted itself a wing of the national movement, and worked as a section of the Congress.

This can no longer be the situation. The 'Workers and Peasants' Party is the representative of the advancing mass movement. The dominant leadership of the Congress associates itself with the retreating bourgeois bloc, whose representative organisations is the All Parties Conference. The two movements are separate, and their leading organisation must do so also. The Workers' and Peasants' Party must henceforth play a definitely independent part.

For some time however the Congress will maintain its composite character, of a loose organisation, with indefinite creed, under bourgeois leadership, but with a petty bourgeois following including different social strata and different political tendencies, some of a potentially revolutionary nature. While this is the case, and while the Workers' and Peasants' Party remains relatively weak and unorganised in the country, it will be necessary to follow the traditional policy of forming fractions within Congress organisations, for the purpose of agitation, of exposing its reactionary leadership and of drawing the revolutionary sections towards the Workers' and Peasants' Party. This policy however is only temporary. The Workers' and Peasants' Party can have no intention of dominating or capturing the Congress: the function of its members within the Congress is a purely critical one. Party member cannot therefore be allowed to take office in Congress organisations. The object of the Workers' and Peasants' Party can only be to build up its own independent organisation, so that it can as soon as possible dispense with the necessity of agitation within the Congress.

The relation with the Independence League is of a different nature. Although not homogeneous in membership, the Independence League has a definite policy and programme. It is in essence a bourgeois organisation whose policy is an insincere travesty of that of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and whose object is in large part to prevent the independent growth of the mass movement. Workers' and Peasants' Party members cannot enter the Independence League as members, as to do so would be to attribute to it before the masses a seriousness and importance which it does not possess. The Workers' and Peasants' Party can only work with the Independence League in a united front on the basis of its propaganda for independence, which in spite of its frivolous character has objectively some value. But it is necessary continually to expose the League's faults of programme and policy and its fundamentally bourgeois, even Fascist character and ultimately counter-revolutionary role.

As opposed to the policy of the Independence League, the Workers' and Peasants' Party must emphasise the following principal points.

1. It must expose the Nehru Report as a whole, and especially the pretence that it is possible to support simultaneously the Report and independence. The allied conception that Dominion Status is a "step to independence" must also be exploded.

2. There must be left no doubt as to the meaning of independence; it involves the destruction of imperialist political and military control and economic penetration, and hence necessitates revolution.

3. The independence of the labour movement from bourgeois control must be insisted upon, and the necessity of its pursuing its class struggle against all exploiters.

4. The abolition of landlordism, in principle without compensation, must also be put forward, and the consequent necessity of the agrarian revolution.

5. In regard to the states, the policy of the Nehru Report, which is supported by the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia of the states, represented in the states' peoples conference, must be opposed. It is in effect to leave the states under their present feudal regime, only advocating some formal change in the relations between the princes and the Government. The policy of the party must be to draw the population of the states into the struggle side by side with the masses of British India, for the total abolition of the states and the establishment of democratic government on the same basis as is advocated for the rest of the country. Only the creation of a mass movement in the states can neutralise or destroy them as a base for imperialism.

It is essential for the party also to develop its own activity in other ways. It must not depend upon the Congress and the bourgeois movement even to the extent that it has in the past for its campaigns and slogans, and must take its own completely independent initiative in all political matters. It is necessary for the party (1) to wage a far more intense campaign against the Trade Disputes Bill, in spite of the indifference of the bourgeois politicians. (2) Similarly a campaign of propaganda must be conducted against the war danger, and particularly against the war preparations against Soviet Russia. (3) The international nature of the revolutionary nationalist and working class movement must be emphasised in concrete manner, and examples from current politics brought before the masses, particularly the workers. Of especial importance is the support of the Chinese workers and peasants against the white terror of the bourgeois nationalists in alliance with imperialism, and exposure of the part played by the Chinese bourgeoisie in the movement. In this matter the whole nationalist press and propaganda is definitely counter revolutionary, and the class sympathy between the Indian and the Chinese bourgeoisie must be exposed.

## **D. CONSTITUTION OF THE ALL-INDIA WORKERS AND PEASANTS PARTY\***

### **1. *Name***

The name of the party shall be "The All-India Workers and Peasants Party.

### **2. *Object***

The object of the party is the attainment of complete independence from imperialism in general and British imperialism in particular and thorough democratisation of India based on economic, social and political emancipation of the masses.

### **3. *Means***

The means shall be the party programme adopted from year to year at the annual session of the party or at any extraordinary congress called for the same purpose.

### **4. *Extent***

The jurisdiction of the party shall extend over the territories including Indian states, known as India proper, adjoining territories under the influence of British imperialism.

### **5. *Membership***

A. The membership of the party shall be of two kinds:

1. Individual.

2. Affiliated body.

B. Any person who will subscribe to the object, constitution and programme of the party may be taken in as an individual member of the party subject to the approval of the national executive committee. Every individual member, except students and women will have to become a member of some workers or peasants union within two months of his becoming a member of the party. Special exception may be made by executive committee provincial or central.

C. Candidates and members shall not be members of any communal organisation or take part in communal propaganda.



D. The national executive committee of the party shall have power to affiliate with it any workers or peasants union which is in sympathy with the object and programme of the party. The party shall undertake the work of giving the members of affiliated unions class-conscious education in trade-unionism and politics, and shall assist the work of the unions by advice and propaganda.

E. Members will have to pay party dues regularly and perform the organised work of the party assigned to them.

#### *6 Subscription*

(a) Each individual member of the party shall pay Rs 3 per annum to be collected by quarterly instalments. The executive committee may exempt or suspend anybody from subscription if it thinks so desirable.

(b) Affiliated organisations: The affiliated organisations shall pay subscription at the rate of Rs 3 per thousand or part thereof per annum.

(c) Donation of any amount will be received by the party from sympathisers.

#### *7 Management*

The work of the party shall be conducted as follows:

(a) There shall be an annual congress of the party. This congress or any special congress of the Workers and Peasants Party of India shall direct and control the policy and programme of the party.

(b) The annual congress of the party shall be held with all individual members and representatives of affiliated organisations on the basis of one per thousand or part thereof.

(c) Special congress: In case of emergency the national executive committee shall have power to summon a special congress.

(d) National executive committee: There shall be an executive committee of the party elected every year at the annual congress from amongst the members (individual and affiliated).

(e) If between two elections there is any vacancy in the national executive committee, the committee shall itself fill up the vacancy from among the individual or affiliated members.

(f) The national executive committee shall be entrusted to carry out the programme of work of the party and shall be responsible to the congress for its work.

(g) The national executive committee shall submit a report of its work to the annual congress of the party.

(h) The work of the party shall be conducted under the guidance of national executive committee which shall meet every three months.

(i) For facilitation of work of the party shall be divided into departments. One member of the national executive committee shall be placed in charge of a department. The national executive committee members in charge of such departments shall be responsible to the executive committee for work of the departments.

## 8. *Office*

A. Bearers. The national executive committee shall elect from among its members, one general secretary and treasurer. Departmental leaders shall also be elected from among the members of the executive committee.

B. Meetings : At a meeting of the national executive committee, the executive committee shall elect its own chairman. At all meetings of the executive committee five members shall form a quorum. At least 14 days notice must be given prior to calling national executive committee meetings.

C. Meetings of the NEC: A national executive member not attending two consecutive meetings without giving satisfactory excuse shall be considered to have vacated his seat and the national executive committee shall have power to fill such vacancy.

9. For a meeting of the congress the national executive committee shall give one month's clear notice to all

provincial committees and affiliated organisations who shall communicate same to all members within a week of receipt.

10. The executive committee shall have power to frame general rules for carrying out the programme of the party.

The national executive committee shall have power to decide whether or not the party members shall participate in outside bodies such as the Indian National Congress, legislative and local boards, international organisations, etc

### *11 Discipline*

It is essential for party work that individuals should observe the requirements of a party discipline. Decisions once taken by the appropriate organ of the party must be obeyed.

Any member found acting against the interests of the party or violating its decisions can be expelled by the provincial executive committees. Such members shall have the right of appeal to the central executive committee.

### *12. Organisation*

Provincial committee should be elected under the direction of the national executive committee of the party.

Branches should be set up in towns talukas and villages under the direction of provincial committees.

Groups set up in factories, railways, mines, etc. should work on factory committees.

Fraction or groups should be set up in trade-union branches management committees, executive committees etc.; and also in provincial congress committees. This applies to the Trade Union Congress and All India Congress Committee.

A definite youth organisation should be brought into being to work in the existing youth movements, trade unions and congress committees etc.

A women section must be set up to work among women.

### **OPERATION OF ORGANISATION**

Study circles must be started forthwith in order that members

may understand and correctly interpret party policy, and most important the application.

It is essential that all committees, branches and fractions should meet regularly, and keep up to date with current events. Therefore provincial executive committees must meet at least once per month. Branches and fractions or groups every week.

The entire branch membership shall be grouped in accordance with their special party work e.g. in trade union group, congress group, peasants group etc. Each member must belong to at least one group. Each group shall appoint a group leader who shall be responsible to the provincial or branch committee according to size.

Fractions or working groups must elect a group leader, who shall be responsible to the provincial or branch committee. These fractions must carry out decisions of an higher body. These decisions will be conveyed to the group by the group leader. After discussion and decision by the group or fraction on a resolution or nominations for official position etc.; the decision of the group must be binding on the whole of the group. The work of the party groups within the trade unions and congress committees shall be guided by the programme and policy of the party. The demands of the party must be pressed forward and the propaganda of the party thus advanced. This applies to groups operating in the TUC and AICC.

**BRANCH COMMITTEES:** The branch committee shall coordinate the entire work of the town or village, and be responsible to the provincial committee to which it must report all work, and receive instructions and general line of policy, which it should convey to the groups. The branch committee must get reports of work from group leaders.

**PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES:** These committees when elected shall coordinate the party activity in the province. They will receive instructions and policy on current affairs from the national executive committee. The provincial committee in turn conveys this information to the branches, groups

etc., and must receive report regularly from branches, groups etc. on work done, future meetings of organisations, election of officers etc. The provincial committee shall have power to deal with immediate problems, issue urgent manifestoes and leads in the name of the provincial committee, Workers and Peasants Party, and shall be responsible for the same to the national executive committee.

**Committees elected:** The branch chairman, secretary, executive members and treasurer shall be elected by the whole branch membership and with group leaders shall constitute the executive committee of branch.

**The Provincial Committees:** This committee shall be elected by an annual meeting of representatives, elected by party branches and groups and affiliated organisations throughout the province.

### **E. MANIFESTO FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL TO THE ALL-INDIA CONFERENCE OF WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTIES**

The Communist International supporting everywhere the revolutionary movement of the toilers and the oppressed, through your organisation, albeit not part of our international body, send its greetings to the workers and peasants of India now waging a heroic struggle against imperialist oppression and feudal reaction upon one of the most important sections of the world front. The victorious progress of this struggle demands in our opinion above all, the creation of an independent class party of the proletariat, the uniting and raising of the isolated actions of the peasants to the highest political level, and the formation of a real revolutionary bloc of workers and peasants, under the leadership of the proletariat not in the form of a united workers and peasants party, but on the basis of cooperation in deeds between the mass organisations of the proletariat on the one hand, and peasant leagues and committees on the other, for the overthrow of the imperialists and

the destruction of the political and economic basis of colonial exploitation and slavery. The growing influence of the workers and peasants parties, and particularly the attendance of thousands of peasants' at your provincial conferences, proves that the understanding of the necessity for this militant bloc is penetrating among ever larger masses of toilers.

Your conference is taking place at a moment which may become the turning point in the history of the national revolution. The furious preparations of the British bourgeoisie for a new imperialistic slaughter, and the intensification of all forms of colonial plunder and terror, place the peoples of India in a position from which there is no other way out, but open and determined fight for the overthrow of the alien yoke. The revolutionary crisis in the country is maturing. In the strike movements various detachment of the working class (particularly the textile workers of Bombay) begin to come out as an independent force, conscious of the irreconcilability of its interests with imperialism and the chaffering bourgeoisie, and of its historic role as the champion of the national revolution. More painfully, and slowly, but with equal certainty, the oppressed, ruined and disunited peasantry is entering the path of organised struggle. Growing unemployment, ruin and hopelessness stir also the town petty bourgeoisie to revolutionary activity. The pent-up discontent of the masses, the despair, and the sublime hatred for the oppression, is already breaking forth to transform these isolated and defensive actions, attempt an aggressive fight against British imperialism and its native allies, that is the fundamental task before your conference.

The main obstacle to the victorious organised struggle against British imperialism and its feudal allies in the period of increasing terrorism and bloody repression is the *influence of opportunist bourgeois nationalism*. Each day brings and will bring fresh proof of the treachery of the bourgeoisie, of its bringing before imperialist, of its intention to bargain and to come to terms with the latter behind the backs of the toilers of India and at their expense. Lately this treachery

has assumed the character of the most cynical toying with the slogan of "independence" which the swarajists now throw out to deceive the masses, now tucked away in their pocket (the Motilal Nehru report), in order to penetrate into the Simon commission through the back stairs, and now raise again in a distorted shape, simultaneously with the "dominion status" slogan. However, crude and downright dishonesty this game may be, the penal regime and bloody repression of any exposing criticism particularly communist criticism, create a state of things under which the fraud of bourgeois nationalism still keeps its hold on a considerable section of the toilers. The struggle against this fraud compels you not only to be determined at relentless exposure of the bourgeois treachery, but also through systematic every day activity to bring home this exposure, to the masses of the workers and peasants. The experience of the last movement in Bardoli showed how great the danger is still that not only the bourgeoisie, but even the usurers, who buy out the peasants' lands find themselves able to subordinate the movement of the peasants and to utilise it for their own ends. No declarations of readiness to combat opportunism have any revolutionary worth if there is no practical and actual proof of the waging of this struggle among the masses, and of the overcoming of the bourgeois influence is persistent every day work.

The greatest danger to the organisation of the masses, to the creation of a revolutionary bloc of the proletariat and the peasantry and to the proletarian leadership in this bloc, consists not only in bourgeois nationalism as such, but comes from the *organisations and groups of "prominent" petty-bourgeois intellectuals actually influenced by the form of the "Independence League"*. The wavering and oscillating petty-bourgeois intellectuals of India are either tied up with the system of landlordism and usury and preached the return to obsolete forms of pre-capitalist exploitation or they reflect the interests of capitalist exploitation being the agents of the bourgeoisie within the national movement. In either case

they deny the importance of the class struggle, and whilst claiming to be "at the head" of the workers and peasants movement, they are fit in reality only to behead it. The better elements alone of the petty-bourgeoisie intellectuals with a revolutionary frame of mind may rise to the proletarian class viewpoint, and become a positive factor in the national revolutionary struggle.

The "*Independence League*" at least in its present shape in fact assists official swarajism in its nefarious play with the slogans of "Independence" and "dominion status". Duly appreciating the very fact of the organisation of this League as proof that at the present time one cannot approach the masses without demanding independence and the overthrow of imperialism, your conference at the same time cannot fail to dissociate itself from the confusion and twaddle which characterises the advertised League platform with its lavish promises.

The masses must realise that all the talk of the organisers of the League in their platform about "nationalisation" and "socialisation" is an empty sound if in the same breath they recommend FOR THE PRESENT "impartial board for arbitration with a view to making strikes and lockouts unnecessary" (platform of the Bengal Independence League).

There cannot be a shadow of confidence in the verbal promises of the League generally, when in reality some of its leaders (the chairman of the Bengal branch of the League, S.C. Bose) continue to play the part of blacking organisers (betrayal of the last strike in Jamshedpur). The masses want from the political leaders of the petty-bourgeoisie not words but revolutionary deeds. The more determined and outspoken your criticism, the sooner the League will either expose itself as the left-wing of bourgeois nationalism, or having shaken off the politicians at the head, will join, for a certain period and within certain limits, the national-revolutionary camp (retaining, however, even in this case their incorrigible half-heartedness, chronic wavering, and inevitable confusion in the whole of their politics and tactics).



The experience of all revolutions shows that the peasantry is inevitably deceived and defeated if it acts without the alliance and the leadership of the proletariat. In explaining to the peasantry the need for the workers and peasants bloc it is not difficult at the same time to explain to them, upon the grounds of the severe experience of the Indian revolution, the need for the leadership of the proletariat in this bloc. The Indian proletariat has demonstrated to all the toilers that it represents the most revolutionary force in the country, it has shown that it will stop at nothing in this struggle neither in the town nor in the village, that it marches and will march, in the front rank of the fight against British imperialism, feudalism, and the reformist bourgeoisie. The proletariat is helping and will help the peasantry which has been thrust by imperialism into a singular condition of humiliation, disunion and barbaric exploitation, shrouded in the falsehoods of religion, caste and nationalisms, to organise its force and to break the shackles of slavery, bondage, land hunger and imperialist and feudal oppression. The leadership of the proletariat, as the more concentrated, united, enlightened and hardened section of the toilers in this struggle, will secure the victory to the workers and peasants bloc. It is extremely important to demonstrate to the peasants in deeds and practice the significance of fighting alliance with the proletariat in their everyday struggle, already now.

The organisation of the workers and peasants bloc is based upon the common interest of the workers peasants and the town poor, in the fight against imperialism and feudal reaction. Nevertheless, it does not eliminate the class differences, and therefore, *it does not imply by any means the fusion of the workers and peasants into the party.* In the Great October revolution the proletariat gained the following of the peasantry of all the nations which inhabited the former tsarist Russia just because it was organised into the independent Bolshevik Party, into a party armed with the Marxist-Leninist theory, irreconcilable to pettybourgeois waverings, disciplined, self-sacrificing, capable of screening itself underground from the

blows of the tzarist terror, at the same time never ceasing to take advantage of all the legal possibilities. The Indian proletariat, we feel sure, will follow this path.

The Indian proletariat will be the champion of the national-revolutionary fight and lead to victory of the peasantry, the town poor, and all the toilers, if it organises and consolidates the vanguard the Communist Party, which will educate the working masses in the spirit of a clear and unmistakable class policy in the realisation of the need for tremendous sacrifices in order to overthrow imperialism and bourgeoisie. The existing (only on paper) Communist Party of India, since it does not show any signs of revolutionary life, has no grounds to consider and even to call itself communist, although there are individual communists among its members. Under the conditions of imperialist terror by the feeble organisation of the Indian workers and the bullying of the reformist trade-union bureaucrats the task of building a genuine Communist Party will be considerably facilitated if at the same time broad revolutionary organisations of the workers are formed with the active participation of communists, or a broad left wing created in the trade-union movement upon the platform of consistent class struggle.

We expect that your conference will raise the question of participating in the building of such broad revolutionary mass organisation of the workers. These can be built only in the irreconcilable everyday struggle against imperialism and bourgeoisie, as well as against reformism and the petty-bourgeois groups under the cloak of socialism. The heroic steadfastness of the Indian proletariat in the strikes, the rapidity with which it gathers its forces although as yet only locally, the persistent endeavours to promote strike leaders from its own ranks—leaves no room, no doubt that the elements for revolutionary mass organisations of the workers have matured.

We are convinced that your conference will discuss, and severely condemn the grave opportunistic blunders committed by the representative of the workers and peasants

parties in the leadership of the strike movement, particularly in connection with the heroic struggle of the textile workers of Bombay. The source of these mistakes is the insufficiently clear stand against the reformist blacklegs (Joshi) the relentless exposure of whom is an indispensable condition for every victorious strike (and for strengthening the organisation of the proletariat in the course of its development). Having yielded to the demand of the trade-union bureaucrats at the commencement of the strike to refrain from exposing to the working masses the reformist treachery, the members of the workers and peasants parties had thus disarmed themselves also for the further struggle. Surrender to the reformists led inevitably to surrender to the employers, to the signing of the demands which were dictated by the chairman of the Arbitration commission, the flunkey of the Anglo-Indian bourgeoisie, a surrender all the more inadmissible since, as partial strikes which subsequently broke out proved the workers refused to give up the fight in spite of all their hardships. Only by learning from the severe lessons of the past struggle the working class will promote from its midst a consistent class leadership for the imminent, even more decisive strikes of the textile workers, railwaymen, miners and metal workers. With the growing intensity, of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat on one hand and the bloody onslaught of imperialism against the workers' organisation on the other (the Trade Disputes bill), the preparation and organisation of the general strike becomes the most urgent task of the current struggle. The Indian workers who performed wonders of endurance during the defensive fights in the fights of 1928, will show similar wonders of valour in the forthcoming aggressive fights.

In the *work among the peasants* the task is to pass from general slogans and to draw in the peasants to the real revolutionary struggle in the defence of the everyday interests of the masses. Your organisations cannot afford to wave aside even seemingly backward manifestations of the anger of the peasantry. You must endeavour in every

manifestation of this kind to discover the revolutionary substance and to transfer it to a higher level of class consciousness. In view of the tremendous variety of forms of land tenure in India, and the multitude of forms of pre-capitalist and semi-feudal bondage, the best way to embrace the peasant-movement in the various districts and localities is to organise from below peasant leagues led wherever possible by agricultural labourers and poor peasantry proved in the fight. It is necessary, not only in words, but in deeds, to endeavour to raise the isolated actions of the peasants to the level of an agrarian revolution. Under the slogans of abolition of every form and vestige of feudalism and semi-feudalism, of confiscation of the land of zamindars, usurers, priests and its transfer to the toiling peasantry while accuring in the first place the interest of the poor peasants, the agrarian revolution has been and remains the pivot of the national-revolutionary struggle in India. \*

In purging the leading bodies of your organisations from suspicious and unreliable elements, you will, of course, above all, be guided by the criterion of loyalty and devotion to the cause of the workers and peasants, remembering that the petty-bourgeoisie, not to speak of the bourgeois intellectuals, are closely tied up with the system of big landownership so that they must by all means combat the developing agrarian revolution.

Concerning organisational forms, your conference will have to discuss the question of separating the workers' organisations from the peasants' organisations, so that the former be ensured a clear-cut and consistent class development, and the latter the full embracing of the struggling peasantry. Provincial workers and peasants parties, after an appropriate distribution of their branches and members upon this class basis, are bound to develop in the future in revolutionary mass organisations of the workers on the one hand, into peasants leagues, and committees on the other which in turn will strive to gain the leadership inside existing peasant bodies or will build new peasants organisations. The periodical conferences and

meetings of these mass organisations, called from time to time should constitute one of the forms expressing the militant bloc of the worker and peasant masses. If your conference accepts this point of view, it will put before itself the question of forming a committee for the coordination of the activities of the local workers and peasants organisations, having in mind chiefly their independent revolutionary development upon the class basis.

The Indian toilers, in their hard struggle, are nearing the fulfilment of their great historic task. The proletariat now organising its forces can rely on the support of the peasantry, of the poor of the towns, and of all the oppressed and exploited of India for whom there is no salvation except as the result of the triumphant revolution. It can rely upon the support of the proletariat of all lands and of the oppressed peoples throughout the world. We appeal to your conference to wage a determined fight against waverings and backslidings to criticise grave opportunistic blunders, to work out the revolutionary tactics for the forthcoming fights, to pass to such forms of organisation which, as international revolutionary experience has proved, open the possibility for winning the masses to the cause of the revolution.

*Down with British imperialism!*

*Long live the revolutionary fight of the workers and peasants of India!*

*Long live the revolutionary rising of the colonies!*

*Long live emancipated Soviet India!*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

## **F. XXIII CONFERENCE OF THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS PARTY OF INDIA \***

The revolutionary elements in the Indian nationalist movement are organising themselves. They have not yet found a

\* Written by.             
M. N. Roy

unified leadership. But consciously or unconsciously, they all look for it in the right direction—to the proletariat. The speeches made and resolutions adopted at a number of subsidiary conferences, that took place simultaneously with the annual meeting of the National Congress, show to what an extent the conditions are ripe for the proletariat to exercise hegemony in the struggle for national freedom.

Only a few years ago socialism was practically unknown in India. Indeed, the attitude even of the radical petty bourgeoisie towards socialism was one of suspicion and hostility. The nationalist petty bourgeoisie were decidedly reactionary in social outlook. Rude realities of the present, and hope for a brighter future are liberating the petty bourgeoisie from the illusions about the dead past. Breaking away from feudal traditions, they find little solace in capitalism, which under the conditions of colonial exploitation does not offer their class any prospect of substantial economic betterment. They must gather courage to look further into the future. And there the beacon of socialism attracts their vision showing them the only way out of political suppression, economic ruin and cultural stagnation. As a result to this, the most characteristic feature of the political situation in India today is the rapidly growing popularity of socialism. All the petty bourgeois subsidiary organisations of the National Congress profess socialism.

It is significant that the profession of socialism by the petty bourgeois radicals coincides with their revolt against the policy of compromise with imperialism. This shows once again the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to play an independent political role. As soon as they attempt to break away from the leadership of the big bourgeoisie, they, in spite of themselves, tend to come under the influence of the proletariat. They do so in spite of themselves, for the petty bourgeoisie by themselves are not a socialist class. And, as they do so in spite of themselves, they are not likely to advance in the revolutionary direction unless the proletariat meet them half way and make a fighting alliance

with them for the realisation of the programme of national revolution, for betraying which they are revolting against the leadership of the big bourgeoisie. Their profession of socialism should be taken as indication of the opportunity to bring them under the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. In the revolutionary struggle for national democratic freedom under the hegemony of the proletariat, some of them are likely to be entirely de-classed and become consciously socialist. On the other hand, there is the danger of their relapsing under the control of the big bourgeoisie or developing into a Socialist Democratic Party, if their objective (unconscious) advance towards the proletariat is not met promptly and tactfully.

The other danger of petty bourgeois radicalism crystallising into a reformist Social Democratic Party, has been revealed by the views expressed by some leaders of the movement on such vital question as the function of the state, means of capturing political power, relation of classes, confiscation of land, etc.

A picture of the situation gives a very clear perspective of future development, and shows our tasks. It is a tug-of-war for the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. Which way should it develop—towards constitutional agitation under the bourgeois leadership, or revolutionary fight under the hegemony of the proletariat ? The petty bourgeoisie, which constitute the great bulk of the conscious and active nationalist ranks, stand in the middle, willing to move towards revolution, but lacking a determined, clear-sighted, unified leadership. And as this can alone come from the proletariat, the task before us is clearly defined.

During the meeting of the National Congress the following subsidiary bodies held their separate conferences : 1. All-India Youths League; 2. Swadhin Bharat Sangha (organisation of those who suffered persecution for revolutionary activity); 3. Socialist Youth League; and 4. All-India Volunteers Corps. The members of these bodies represent the most active element and majority of the Congress

rank and file. Socially, they are all petty bourgeois intellectuals who are, as a rule, in very precarious economic condition. The Independence League, recently formed by the left wing leaders of the Congress, is at present the political leader of this revolutionary nationalist mass. The League also held its meetings during the sessions of the Congress. But being an integral part of the Congress, it did not assert separate existence. Consequently, radical and revolutionary forces, that constituted the majority in all the congresses and conferences (except the All-parties Con-vention) were without a unified political leadership. The Congress, and incidentally its clearly revolutionary subsidiary organisations, were dominated by the bourgeoisie standing outside it. The following quotations from the speeches made and resolutions passed in the subsidiary conferences show that the outcome of the Congress does not represent the realities of the situation, which is decidedly revolutionary.

In a statement made in the All-parties Convention in opposition to the dominion constitution the spokesman of the Swadhin Bharat Sangha said :

“Dominion status means that the entire politics of India will in the last resort be controlled by Britain in the interest of British imperialism...We are also of the opinion that the salvation of India and her masses lies in the establishment of socialist regime. We are afraid that the constitution sketched in the Nehru report is based on capitalist construction of society. We are not prepared to accept this constitution.”

In contrast to the compromise in the National Congress on the controversy over independence versus dominion status, the Youths' conference resolved that

“Complete independence and not dominion status should be the immediate objective of India.”

The conference called upon the youths to attain this goal by “all possible means”. This is an improvement upon the independence resolution passed by the Congress in 1927, in which such restrictions were placed upon the means for the



attainment of independence as reduced the whole resolution to empty verbiage:

By the second resolution the conference enjoined the youths to "combat capitalism by all available means". Capitalism was condemned as "detrimental to the best interest of the nation".

A third resolution indicated revolt against the cult of reactionary pacifism. This meant repudiation of Gandhi—the idol of petty bourgeois nationalism. This resolution calls upon:

"Young India to take up the new challenge of imperialism and to create in the country an atmosphere in which responsive violence should not be deprecated."

This resolution has direct bearing on the situation. A few days before the meeting of the National Congress a British police officer was killed at Lahore. The assassination was generally interpreted as an act of the nationalists avenging the death of Lajpat Rai of injuries inflicted by the police during a demonstration. All the nationalist leaders, including those of the Congress, rushed to denounce vehemently the perpetrators of the deed, as they had done on previous occasion. This treacherous and cowardly behavior of the bourgeois leaders was always resented by the rank and file. Now it is openly condemned. The nationalist rank and file declare their determination to answer imperialist violence by revolutionary violence.

The Socialist Youths' conference met with the slogan, "We want Revolution, and not Reformation". We find the following statements in the speech opening the conference :

"Nationalism is the slogan of the middle class, while socialism is the cry of the toiling masses. The present social evils can be cured not by reform, but by revolution.

"Dominion status was the cry of vested interest, and it remains to be seen how far the extremist section of the capitalist class will become revolutionary in politics."

Thousands of young men went about in military uniform

as nationalist volunteers, signifying what such demonstration can only signify, that is, an enthusiastic will on their part for a real fight for freedom. When this is compared with the previous uniform of loin-cloth and Gandhi-cap of homespun stuff, the implication of the development of the movement becomes evident.

The climax of the situation was a huge mass demonstration in which over twenty-thousand workers participated. Previously thousands of workers, particularly peasants, used to be herded into the meetings of the Congress to be lectured by the bourgeois leaders. They had nothing to say or do; but only to provide an imposing background for the reformist policy of bourgeois nationalism. They are no longer satisfied with the passive role. This year the demonstration was a part of the general revolt against bourgeois leadership, and it was the most important—the dominating factor in the revolt. The demonstration indicates the readiness of the proletariat to appear on the political scene as an independent force, which is the essential condition for its ability to be the new leader in the new stage of the revolution.

Meeting in this atmosphere of revolutionary development from all sides, the Workers and Peasants Party, whose driving force are the communists, was objectively the most important event of the moment. The Workers and Peasants Party is not the Communist Party, although the communists play in it the leading and dominating role. Several years ago it appeared on the scene as the first sign of radicalisation of the nationalist masses. As such the communists supported it, and aided its growth. Practically all the great strikes of the last two years were led under the banner of the Workers and Peasants Party. The object of the communists was to make this new party the rallying ground for all the nationalist revolutionary elements, to develop it into a revolutionary nationalist mass party which is a crying need of the moment.

The quickening of the process of radicalisation inside the nationalist rank during the last year placed the Workers and Peasants Party in a very favourable position. Until now the

party functioned in loose, decentralised manner, as practically independent provincial organisations. It was divided to reorganise the party on a national scale in a conference which should meet simultaneously with the National Congress at the same place.

The conference of the Workers and Peasants Party was very well attended. It magnificently reflected the revolutionary atmosphere prevailing in the country. But in doing so, it forgot, or rather neglected, its objective task—to mobilise all the forces of national revolution under its banner. Instead of coming out as the leader of the entire revolt, it placed itself in the position of one factor—of the revolt.

In the main political resolution of the conference not only the Nehru report is rightly condemned as “a bourgeois democratic scheme of a not very advanced type”, but an attitude of hostile criticism is also taken towards the Independence League representing the opposition to the bourgeois right wing of the Congress. Indeed, no distinction is made between the two factions inside the Congress. When the petty bourgeois left radicals are trying to oust the bourgeois leaders from the leadership of the nationalist movement, they are not supported; on the contrary, they also were condemned as the enemies of the workers and peasants, in the same breath with the representatives of big capital and landlordism. The criticism levelled against the programme of the Independence League was essentially correct; but the well-merited criticism should have been accompanied by a positive attitude—an offer of united front on the common platform of anti-imperialist struggle. The relation with the rest of the nationalist movement is defined as follows :

“While the Workers and Peasants Party remains relatively weak and unorganised in the country, it will be necessary to follow the traditional policy of forming fractions within Congress organisations for the purpose of agitation, of exposing the reactionary leadership and of drawing revolutionary sections towards the WPP. This

policy, however, is only temporary. The WPP can have no intention of dominating or capturing the Congress. The function of its members within the Congress is purely critical. Our party members, therefore, cannot be allowed to take office in the Congress organisations."

A motion that the members of the party should join the Independence League with the purpose of capturing it was also rejected.

*(Inprecor, Vol 9, No.6, 1 February 1929, pp 93-94)*

## **Declaration of The British Delegation on the Theses on the Colonial Question\***

**In The Sixth World Congress  
of The Communist International**

### **I**

The British Delegation has decided to vote against the acceptance as a basis of the Theses moved by Comrade Kuusinen. The British Delegation has furthermore tabled an amendment to the theses of Comrade Kuusinen, which it has requested the Presidium to circulate to the Delegations, and which it requests will be voted upon at this Congress also.

### **II**

In view of a number of accusations and charges which have been made during the Congress debate, the British Delegation desires to make the following statement of our position.

In the first place, we repudiate the allegation that at any time we have defended the theory of "decolonisation". We regard this allegation as an attempt to cover up the non-Leninist theory of "agrarianisation". As can be seen from the speeches of all the members of the British Delegation who have opposed the theses of Comrade Kuusinen, we have not for a moment entertained or supported the absurd and un-Marxian theory of "decolonisation". We are not responsible for things which have been written by Comrade Roy or Comrade Luhani or other comrades in the past. We are responsible for what we have said ourselves, and it is upon what we say that we take our stand. We have never

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suggested that imperialism in any way has weakened the oppression of the colonies, or their dependence upon or rule by finance capital; on the contrary. We have never suggested that imperialism was a progressive force in the colonies; on the contrary. We have never stated that imperialism softens the contradictions within the colonies, or as between the colonies and the imperialist metropolis. On the contrary, we stated, and we stand by it, that these contradictions are enormously accentuated.

We stated, and we still stand by this, that in the first place "decolonisation" in the real sense of the word involves a revolution, that there is no "decolonisation" without revolution and secondly that imperialism hastens the development of the objective conditions which make for successful revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. The road of the colonies to real "decolonisation", that is, to independence and emancipation, can take one of two forces. Either, in the event of proletarian victory in the metropolis, the victorious working class of the former imperialist country will help the colonies to move towards Socialism, avoiding the capitalist stage of development. Or, the other road is through a national revolution which, in the epoch of wars and revolutions and the existence of the U. S. S. R., will grow into a Socialist Revolution. In this case, the bounden duty of the proletariat in the ruling country is to help the colonies in these revolutions by using every possible means to fight the imperialists and defeat them.

On the whole of this question we stand where Lenin stood:

"The economic difference between the colonies and the European peoples—at least the majority of the latter—consists primarily in this, that the colonies used to be drawn into the exchange of commodities, but as yet not into capitalist production. Imperialism has changed this. Imperialism is, amongst other things, the export of capital. Capitalist production is being more and more rapidly transplanted to the colonies. They cannot be torn away from dependence on

European finance-capital. From the military point of view, as from the point of view of expansion, the separation of the colonies is practical, as a general rule, only under Socialism, while under capitalism it is possible either as an exception, or at the price of a series of revolutions and insurrections, both in the colonies and in the metropolis." (Works, Vol. 19, page 196.)

It was alleged by Comrade Remmele that our point of view with regard to industrialisation was a rejection of Lenin's theory that the colonies may escape the capitalist stage of development. The assumption behind this allegation is that the direct road to Socialism for the colonies lies through complete agrarisation on the one hand, and the revolutionary bourgeoisie on the other. To make matters quite clear, we repeat that we stand with Lenin on the first of the two alternative prospects referred to above:

'If the revolutionary victorious proletariat carries on amongst them systematic propaganda, while the Soviet Governments come to their help with all the resources at their disposal, it is incorrect to assume in that case that the capitalist stage of development is inevitable for the backward peoples.'

There was not one word in this suggesting that industrialisation does not take place before the revolutionary proletariat of the metropolis reaches a position in which it can grant this assistance, i.e., in the era of finance-capitalism.

### III

The following are the reasons why we vote against the resolution to accept the theses as a basis:

1 The theses base their analysis on a picture of the transformation of the colonies into (not their "maintenance as", which some defenders of the theses attempted to make out) the agrarian hinterlands or appendages of the metropolis. While this was partly (only partly) true of the objective conditions in the classical period of capitalism, it is not true

of the imperialist period, and all the facts show this. In particular, the description of India as a "village continent" is grotesque. We make the simple contrast between Lenin's phrase about the "transplanting" of capitalist production more and more rapidly to the colonies and everyone who knows the position in the British Empire knows that this is taking place, with the result of industrialising the colonies and the passage in paragraph of the theses:

"In any case the capitalist enterprises cultivated by imperialism in the colonies (with the exception of a few workshops established for possible military needs) are predominantly or almost exclusively of an agrarian capitalist sort, with a low organic composition of capital."

2. We vote against accepting the theses as a basis because it gives a totally one-sided and historically incorrect picture.

"The tendency of the big imperialist Powers to adapt their monopolised colonies more and more exclusively to the requirements of their own industries."

This passage, which is characteristic of the whole of the part of the theses, leaves out the distinction between the classic era of capitalism and the era of finance capital, when in the search for higher rates of profit, and not the requirements of industries in the metropolis, that is the determining factor. Again, the classic example is the British Empire, where the industrialisation of the colonies, repeatedly referred to in resolutions of the Communist International, and due exactly to the process of "transplanting" which Lenin referred to, has been a powerful factor in advancing the depression and stagnation of British native industries, and the parasitic transformation of British capitalism.

3. We vote against accepting the theses as a basis because throughout there is a general blurring of the distinction between the era of classic capitalism and the era of imperialism, the rule of finance-capital. This is indicated most clearly by the mere passing reference to "deviations" from



the general anti-industrialisation trend of imperialist colonial policy, "due to interests of finance-capital in exporting capital". Not only this passage confuse policy with objective processes of development but it draws a fantastic picture of the policy of finance-capital as a kind of deviation from that of capitalism as a whole. Our attitude on this question does not mean that we deny the existence of retarding factors or of retardation. This was made clear by several speeches. But the line of the theses is that there is a general process of retardation of industrialisation, with certain deviations due to the obstructive tactics of finance-capital. Our line is that, in the era of monopolist finance-capitalism, industrialisation of the colonies inevitably takes place, despite retarding factors in imperialist policy which mercilessly cripple the production forces of the colony, but nevertheless do not prevent the main trend.

4. We vote against the theses because on the basis of these incorrect premises they arrive at a politically false and dangerous conclusion; that of a long prospect of "vacillation" of the colonial bourgeoisie in the course of the national revolution. We consider that the reference to the role of the Russian bourgeoisie between 1905 and 1917—objectively a role of counter-revolution from beginning to end, notwithstanding certain "oppositionist" demonstrations from time to time, and notwithstanding the fact that in February 1917 the bourgeoisie did its best to head the mass revolt, once it had begun, in order to behead it—only emphasises the total incorrectness of the line of the theses, and their defiance of facts. To speak of the Indian swarajists as having not yet "betrayed the national liberation struggle in the decisive manner in which the Kuomintang did so in China", is not only to ignore the totally changed circumstances since 1920, when the theses of the Second Congress were written, but also to imply that the Communists can change their estimate only when large scale massacres of workers and peasants begin. Throughout the theses only speak with very big reservations, and after all kinds of saving

clauses, of the ultimately counter-revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in the present epoch. The theses confuse the necessary distinction which the Communist Party must draw, for purposes of manoeuvring, between the different interests within the counter-revolutionary camp, with a distinction between the objective historical roles played by different sections of that camp.

5. We vote against accepting the theses as a basis because, it is an effort to reconcile false premises and wrong conclusions with actual-realities and the principles of Marx and Lenin, the theses repeatedly fall into eclecticism unworthy of a Comintern document. The prevailing method of the theses is: "on the one hand we must recognise, on the other hand we cannot but admit", without any consistent line. Thus: a) We find the native bourgeoisie suddenly appearing — still more the proletariat, with a degree of strength sufficient to enable it to struggle for the hegemony of the national revolution — as "forces of resistance to imperialism. all this in "village continents" which are becoming more and more agrarian : b) In Paragraph 7 we had mysterious reference to "circumstances" which may force the imperialists to make lasting concessions, without any attempt to explain what the circumstances can be precisely because an investigation of this term would reveal the weakness of the whole document : c) the cobweb of reservations and contradictions which covers the clauses dealing with the role of the native bourgeoisie (Paragraphs 19, 20, 21, 22, 23) : d). The entirely false picture of historical events in the colonial countries after the war given in Paragraph 9, due to a method of selecting facts which systematically discount the strength of the colonial revolt against the domination of British finance-capital. This eclectic method deprives the theses of all semblance of a militant document, such as a Comintern resolution should be.

#### IV

In this connection, we wish to make a strong protest against the polemical methods employed by Comrade Kuusinen in

his concluding speech, intended to create the impression that Comrade Rothstein was entering an apology for British imperialism, instead of correcting the glaring omission in the theses to give proper prominence to the national post-war revolts of Afghanistan, Turkey and Persia. Such methods in the long run compromise only those who employ them.

We repudiate the suggestions that our criticisms of the theses are an apology or defence of imperialism. They no more represent a defence of imperialism than the well-known passage of Marx on the consequences of capitalist development constitutes a defence of or apology for capitalism.

With regard to the various descriptions which several comrades, notably Comrade Murphy, saw fit to give to our line of criticism — "Menshevik", "ultra-Left", characteristic of the leadership of the British Labour Party", "reminiscent of the Second. International", etc., — we desire to state the following: So far as Comrade Murphy is concerned, we confine ourselves to remarking that his observations on the alleged opportunism and ultra-Leftism of the British Delegation least of all benefit Comrade Murphy.

So far as Comrade Kuusinen's references to Comrade Bennett and the British Party are concerned, we know and the Comintern knows the value of the work which Comrade Bennett has put in, and is putting in, with the British Party, and we know the leading part played by Comrade Bennett in carrying through, in opposition to the majority opinion of the British Party, those very decisions of the IX. Plenum to which Comrade Kuusinen refers.

We are also aware that Comrade Kuusinen's main contribution to the political leadership of the British Party was his strenuous defence, in the winter of 1924, of the theory that the road to a mass Party in Great Britain lay primarily through the organisation of the Left wing in the Labour Party — a proposition on which we were able to defeat him in the Presidium. With this in our minds, and also bearing in mind the somewhat novel distinction (so far as the

Communist International is concerned) which Comrade Kuusinen drew in his concluding speech as between "English Communists" and "real English Communists", we venture to express our doubt whether the cause of the Bolshevisation of the British Party would be very greatly advanced if the E. C. C. I. replaced Comrade Bennett by Comrade Kuusinen.

We wish to enter our emphatic protest against the tone and method of polemics introduced by Comrade Kuusinen and certain other comrades, which, if persisted in, can only have the effect of killing healthy discussions. The only possible method of discussion for the Communist International, in our opinion, is to debate questions upon their merits, with full freedom and encouragement for all Sections and individual comrades to state their point of view freely, frankly and fearlessly. The method of hurrying to tie labels on comrades who hold different opinions, before a final decision has been reached, can only result in destroying independent thought and in robbing Comintern discussions of much of their value.

This particularly applies when the comrades who stick labels are those who should be the last to adopt this course. Nothing would have been easier, for example, than for the British Delegation to brand the author of Paragraph 23 in the theses as an apologist for the Indian bourgeoisie, which at this precise moment is engaged in a bitter economic and political struggle against nearly 200 thousand of the Indian proletariat. We did not consider this method possible for ourselves, and we demand that the E. C. C. I. shall prevent such methods spreading for the future.

## The Indian Struggle for Independence\*

Clemens Dutt

The session of the Indian National Congress held in Madras at the end of 1927 marks a turning point in the history of the Indian nationalist movement. It makes it necessary to examine very carefully the nature and significance of the new developments and, especially in view of reactions here, brings us sharply up against the question as to what should be the attitude of British labour towards the Indian struggle.

The focus of attention has been the boycott of the Statutory Commission appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1919, "for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government" and to "report as to whether it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government existing" in British India. The appointment of the Commission has raised the fundamental issue of acceptance of the right of the British ruling power to determine the character of the Indian constitution, and is noteworthy for the intensity and unanimity of the opposition and hostility it has evoked, but it is not itself the central feature of the present situation. The boycott of the Commission has been embarked upon for a variety of reasons and, while in itself an act of opposition to British imperialist interests, does not necessarily involve any fundamental antagonism.

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The most outstanding immediately apparent mark of the new stage is the development of the struggle to one directed against British imperialism as a whole. This is very noticeably expressed in the new resolutions of the National Congress. In spite of the return of some right wing politicians, like Mrs. Annie Besant, who had long ago abandoned the Congress on account of its "extremist" character, the Madras session showed a pronounced move to the left. Decisions were taken which were even unexpected and surprising to the leaders themselves.

For the first time, it was proclaimed in clear terms that "the Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence." This, at last, puts the nationalist movement on a level which goes beyond the aims of the upper-class Indians, and which was not previously reached even at the height of the non-co-operation movement. At that time Gandhi defined the object of the non-co-operation programme to be the "redress of the Punjab-Khilafat wrongs" and the establishment of "Swaraj," an indefinite term which came to be accepted by the chief leaders as meaning merely Dominion Status within the British Empire.

Another characteristic sign of the present anti-imperialist standpoint was the decision to join and support the International League against Imperialism, founded at the Conference in Brussels in February, 1927. A resolution was passed opposing the war preparations of British imperialism in India and announcing "that in the event of the British Government embarking on any war-like adventure, and endeavouring to exploit India in it for the furtherance of their imperialist aims, it will be the duty of the people of India to refuse to take any part in such a war or to co-operate with them in any way."

A further indication is to be seen in the resolution recording "assurances of full sympathy with the people of China in their fight for emancipation, who, in the opinion of the Congress, are the comrades of the Indian people in their joint struggle against imperialism."

The Chinese people are engaged in a mass struggle against foreign imperialism and against the agents and allies of foreign imperialism among themselves. Do the resolutions of the Indian National Congress then mean that the Congress forces are similarly pledged to a life and death struggle with British imperialism? It is here that the contradictions within the Indian Nationalist movement make themselves apparent. The definitely anti-imperialist character of the resolutions adopted by the Congress represents a notable advance, indicating the forces at work inside the movement, but the leaders of the Congress give no sign that they intend to translate them into action, which would involve a mass, revolutionary struggle.

The Congress leadership is predominantly in the hands of the Indian middle class, who are connected by a thousand ties, economic and political, with the system of British domination and exploitation. They are in the main the same leaders who were responsible for stifling the mass revolutionary movement in 1920-22. The right wing is openly hostile even to the attitude of anti-imperialism, is against the independence declaration, and only supports the boycott of the Simon Commission for tactical reasons. The Swarajists or Congress party, who constitute the largest section of the elected members of the legislatures based on the present narrow propertied franchise, look upon the independence resolution as a gesture, a reply to Birkenhead, rather than as a real aim for the attainment of which practical measures need to be devised. Up to the eve of the Congress, the old Swaraj party leaders maintained their opposition to the independence demand, and in the draft Constitution prepared for the Congress it finds no place.

The standpoint of the right wing was frankly expressed by Lajpat Rai, himself an ex-member of the Swarajist Party, who made the following comment:

"We feel that any talk of complete national independence at the present moment by our own efforts is mere moonshine. The practical politician in India directs his energies

to a compromise with the British Government on such a basis as may be profitable to both... But those negotiations the British Government will not enter into. That is why I am wholeheartedly in favour of boycotting the Commission."

This betrays the whole vacillating character of the bourgeois opposition to British imperialism. Even if the bourgeois nationalists do not admit, as Lajpat Rai does, that their object is an adjustment of relations with British imperialism which shall be "profitable to both" yet they are in spirit opposed to their own Congress resolutions and averse to realising the consequences of their own decisions. Even on the boycott itself they are not united. Although those opposing the boycott are numerically insignificant, as shown, for example, in the large majority by which the Legislative Assembly determined that there should be no committees set up by it to co-operate with the Commission, there is a section of landholders and big capitalist interests that hold out, while some of those who oppose the Commission only do so because of the non-representation of Indians on it, and not in principle, while still more are opposed to the organisation of hartals and mass demonstrations.

What then determined the character of the anti-imperialist resolutions of the National Congress and their acceptance by the bourgeois leaders? The cause is to be found in the pressure from the rank and file of the nationalist movement which drove the leaders to take up a left position in order to prevent the leadership being taken out of their hands. Between the defeat of the non-co-operation movement in 1922 and the new forward move in 1928 is a period not merely of passive recuperation and recovery after defeat, but of active development and class differentiation. It was a period of intensified industrialisation and economic exploitation. The ranks of the working class were augmented and their organisations strengthened and rendered more class-conscious. The gulf was deepened between the proletarianised peasants and petty bourgeoisie



and the Indian capitalists, who were more and more attracted towards union with British imperialism on the basis of the latter's policy of economic concessions. Thus, while the bourgeois leadership moved steadily to the right, the petty-bourgeois left wing and the mass following of the Congress moved to the left and developed a more and more articulate voice in expressing its discontent with the policy of the leaders

Take, for instance, the independence resolution. This has always been a demand of the left wing, and has been repeatedly put forward to the Congress by provincial organisations. The *Mahratta*, a leading right wing organ, in commenting on the passage of the resolution at Madras, notes that already in previous years, "Mahatma Gandhi had to use all his tact and influence to induce Congress men to reject the proposal." Just prior to the Congress, in November, Pandit Motilal Nehru, the leader of the Congress Party, declared :

"The only result the present action of the Government is likely to lead to is to strengthen the hands of that growing body of Indians who are working for complete independence. I am afraid those who are still for full responsible Government within the Empire will find it difficult to maintain the majority which they undoubtedly have at present."

It is clear that the leaders, who in November still felt that they had the majority, decided in December to bow to the storm, and to put forward the left wing resolutions themselves, rather than face the possibility of being defeated. Under the pressure from below, which especially easily influences the petty-bourgeois left wing, which is already conscious of the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalist policy, the bourgeois leaders have been compelled to proclaim that they too stand for uncompromising struggle with imperialism.

The right wing elements, who are outside the Congress, naturally consider that this is a dangerous policy. They already see the red light and are alarmed. Thus, we find Sir H. S. Gour, loyalist moderate, declaring :

"The mentality of the Congress has been the mentality of the proletariat. It is run by those who advocate the doctrine of Bolshevism. The under-current of its methods of work is Bolshevik."

This is interesting as an instinctive expression of class feeling, but, actually, as we have seen, it is untrue. In spite of its radical declarations, the Indian National Congress remains in the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie and cannot provide the leadership for a revolutionary mass struggle. Consequently, its anti-imperialist resolutions, although significant of the pressure from below, have not the importance of a new revolutionary policy. If there was no force ready to challenge the present bourgeois leadership, it could not be said that the Indian national movement had advanced to a new stage.

But the real significance of the new phase of the movement is to be found precisely in the emergence of such a challenge. The awakening revolutionary forces of the masses are beginning to group themselves under their own independent political leadership expressed through the Workers' and Peasants' Party. This party developed during the last two years through the alliance of left wing nationalist groups with politically conscious working class elements, and its growing activity and influence was one of the most significant features in the history of the past year.

At the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in May, 1927, the representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Party put forward a proposed programme for the National Congress which attracted considerable attention, although discussion on it was ruled out of order. The programme demanded the adoption of complete national independence as the goal of the Congress, and called for the preparation of direct action by the masses, including the organisation of a general strike as a political weapon, through agitation in support of a programme of demands for economic and political rights and organisation for the workers and peasants.

The Workers' and Peasants' Party played a prominent part

in the Bengal-Nagpur railway strike, and in working-class and peasant demonstrations during the year. At the same time it has an influential hold on the Congress organisation in Bombay, and, in a lesser degree, elsewhere. It addressed its own Manifesto to the National Congress proposing the calling of a Constituent Assembly on the widest possible basis in order to determine a constitution for India, and a programme of action in support of it. Most noticeable of all is the fact that the mass demonstrations of workers which greeted the arrival of the Simon Commission in Bombay were organised under the direct leadership of the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

This is a clear indication of the entry of the masses into the struggle as an independent political force. This is that marks the new stage into which the Indian struggle for independence is entering. As yet the demands of the Indian workers and peasants have been given little heed to by the nationalist movement as a whole. In proportion as their political organisation increases in strength, the centre of gravity of the Indian national struggle will shift to their fight. Already this process is seen in the emphasis on the struggle against imperialism, for the overthrow of imperialist exploitation can only be realised through the independent revolutionary action of the masses. Every stage in the development of revolution, as Lenin has said, means a change in the mutual relations of the classes in the revolution. Such a change is taking place now in the Indian national revolution, when the leadership is passing from the hands of one class, the bourgeoisie, into the hands of another class, the proletariat, which itself carries with it and leads the struggle of the peasants.

Should the British working-class support the Indian struggle for independence?

The British Labour Party has already by its actions answered this question in the negative. Not merely does it refuse support to the mass struggle of the Indian nationalists, but, by the actions and declarations of its leaders and by the participation of its representatives in the Tory Government

Commission, it has affirmed its solidarity with the policy of British imperialism in India.

While the leaders of the British Labour Party openly justify their solidarity with imperialism, proclaiming their faith in the Empire, in capitalist policy towards India and in the supreme rights of the British Parliament, there are some who defend their opposition to Indian nationalism on the ground that the Indian nationalist movement is led by capitalists and landlords who are only out for their own interests. This, for example, was the basis of the attack on Motilal Nehru which appeared in the *Glasgow Forward* as an answer to his criticism of the Labour Party.

Mr. Mardy Jones, M.P., speaking in India, in November, 1927, made the following observations on the attitude of the Labour Party towards Indian self-government :

"The [Labour] Party would not agree to place political power in the hands of wealthy merchants and landlord classes without a guarantee that the right of political citizenship should be extended to the people generally.... They would require very strong proof that the political and industrial leaders of India were sincerely prepared to secure the betterment of the workers and peasants of India."

This kind of argument implies, in the first place, that Indian political freedom is a gift which the British Labour Party can bestow and not the outcome of a struggle against British imperialism. Secondly, it assumes that it is the wealthy classes to whom power will have to be given, provided only that proof of their good intentions is forthcoming.

But we have seen that the whole significance of recent developments is that the independent political struggle of the masses of the people is making headway even against the opposition of the upper class leaders. It should then follow that the attitude of distrust of the latter on the part of British workers should involve support of the political demands of the workers and peasants. The leaders of the Labour Party, however, condemn the bourgeois nationalists

not from the point of view of the left wing, but from exactly the same standpoint as the reactionary merchants, landholders and flunkies. MacDonald applauds the attempts of the Simon Commission to get the right wing nationalists to desert the Congress and join the reactionaries, and so does the *Daily Herald*. In such cases, therefore, the claim to oppose the selfish interests of Indian capitalism is only a cover for support of British imperialism.

The real struggle of the Indian masses is already coming into the forefront and will become more and more prominent. Since the existing British imperialist exploitation is the greatest oppressor of the Indian masses, the struggle of the latter must be waged under the slogan of complete national independence. Solidarity of the British and Indian Workers' movements demands, therefore, first of all support of the Indian struggle for independence. This support must be given to the Workers' and Peasants' Party as the political leader of the revolutionary mass struggle. Only by full support of the anti-imperialist struggle in India will it be possible to prevent British imperialism using India as a weapon against the workers in this country. Unity in the fight against imperialism is the foremost need of the hour.

## The Present Strike Movement in India\*

All over India to-day strikes are breaking out in ever-increasing frequency. During the autumn of last year there were several, including the prolonged one at Karaghpur, lasting for three months. But their extent was nothing to the wave that is now spreading over the whole of India. *The Times*, of May 17, even considers it necessary to print a report to the effect that the Punjab, where so far only one strike has been reported, will not be touched by the present unrest "though it probably will be affected if the labour troubles in the Presidency (*i.e.*, Bombay province) become general."

There are four noticeable features about this wave of unrest : (1) The officials of that section of the trade union movement with European reputations are either standing aloof for the movement or definitely opposing it. For instance, Shiva Rao, the present Chairman of the Executive Council of the Indian Trades Union Congress, made the following statement at a meeting of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Labour Union, according to the *Bombay Chronicle*, of April 18 :

"The time had come when the trade union movement in India should weed out of its organisation mischief-makers. A warning was all the more necessary for there are certain individuals who go about the country preaching the gospel of strike."

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The leadership of the strike movement is consequently in the hands of the Left Wing of the Labour movement' and in particular of many members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal and Bombay.

(2) The forces of the Government are everywhere in evidence, and ruthless attempts are being made to break up meetings and spread false rumours by *agents provocateurs*. Shootings have already taken place, not only by armed police but by British troops. Many arrests have been made, but reports so far received indicate that the authorities dare not as yet to convict. Strikers, even in the Bengal province, who carried out a march in order to collect funds and food, on their return were driven on like a pack of sheep by the police riding in lorries and were prevented from even resting, let alone seeking refreshment, for close on twenty-four hours on an end. In spite of all this provocation the strikers' demonstrations have been kept disciplined.

(3) The demands of the strikers are largely the elementary demands for recognition of the union, against wage reductions, for wage increases, against victimisation, and for better housing accommodation or allowances for housing, and in one case the most elementary demand for the immediate cessation of all abusive and filthy language—the necessity for such a demand signifying the brutal treatment which the agents of British imperialism consider they can impose upon the subject races.

(4) The unrest is not only confined to the urban areas. For in January there was unrest on a tea estate at Mijkar in Assam, where a manager was attacked, the reason for the unrest being given as a demand for higher wages. Near Bardoli in the Bombay province, in April there were protest meetings against the decision to increase the level of assessments on the peasants and a demand that they should rather be reduced—a demand which was supported in about seven other areas in the same district.

Two of the most noteworthy examples of this strike movement are given below.

### **Bombay Textile Strike**

It has long been evident that a conflict in Bombay was inevitable. As the international cotton situation became more and more pressing, the millowners of India, like those of Egypt and Japan, and for the matter of that, like the cotton lords of Manchester and New Bedford, in their anxiety to outbid each other in the world markets, have been driven to pursue a common policy of rationalisation and reaction. The form to be taken by the Bombay millowners was already foreshadowed in the Report of the Indian Tariff Board, where the extension of the piecework system, increase in the number of spindles allotted to each spinner and looms per weaver are strongly recommended. It is taken as axiomatic that labour costs must be reduced, but the previous attempts of the Bombay owners have not met with much success for while their rivals in Ahmedabad were able to reduce wages in 1923, the efforts of the Bombay millowners to follow their example in 1924 and 1925 ended in failure. The alternative method of speeding up is now being tried out, and warned by the strikes at the end of last year, the owners opened their campaign with considerable caution, putting forward the E. D. Sassoon concern as a sort of pioneer battalion, while the others held themselves in readiness to advance into the breach at the first favourable opportunity.

On January 3 the gallant five—Apollo, Alexandra, Spring, Rachel, and Jacob Sassoon—their names are like a battle cry—posted notices to the effect that each spinner was to work double frames. The challenge was answered—the workers struck, the mills closed ; soon 10,000 men were out.

It should be noted that the Bombay Textile Labour Union took the opportunity of the breaking out of this strike to declare itself “unequivocally” against the policy of a general strike. The Workers’ and Peasants’ Party, however, were in favour of the general strike policy; the strike, through lack of sufficient support, broke down, and the workers, returned on the companies’ own terms.



The owners immediately proceeded to put into force the further recommendations of the report of the Textile Tariff Board. On April 16, however, the workers were out again on strike, and within a week practically all mills were deserted involving some 150,000 workers. One of the main grievances of the workers was the reduction in wages involved in the introduction of higher counts, one of the Tariff Board's recommendations. By this means, owing to the reduction in weight of cotton that could be worked, involved in their introduction, the wages of the workers were reduced from some 58 rupees a month to 45 or 40 rupees, reckoned by the strike committee to be equivalent to an all-round cut of 25 per cent. Another grievance was a change in working hours of some workers involving an increase of one-and-a-half hours to eleven per day.

A strike committee was immediately formed, but it was noticeable that the leaders of the Bombay Textile Labour Union kept aloof from the dispute. What is more, on April 19, three days after the commencement of the strike, N. M. Joshi, one of its leaders, gave an extraordinary interview to the *Bombay Chronicle*, which he started off by saying: "As yet I do not know what the exact cause of the present unrest is," yet went on to admit that there was "no doubt" that the millowners were attempting to reduce wages.

Then after regretting that the Millowners' Association had omitted to negotiate with his union before introducing the cuts in wages, &c., he remarked:

"Under the circumstances, when the Millowners' Association is unwilling to negotiate with the representatives of the organisation of workers and when some persons, who believe more in strikes than in negotiations naturally get more scope for their activities, *the representatives of the Bombay Textile Labour Union, who are willing to negotiate where negotiations are practicable, have to be content with being merely lookers on.*" (Our italics.)

Whatever doubts Mr. N. M. Joshi had about the causes of the unrest the chairman of the Millowners' Association,

Mr. J. B. Petit, seemed to have no doubts whatever ; for in the course of an interview with the *Bombay Chronicle*, on April 27, he made the following statement, worthy indeed of Baldwin's statement in July, 1925, to the miners:

"A straight cut in wages would appear to be inevitable."

At a great mass meeting the leaders of the strike, many of whom were members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, were elected on to a strike committee, in addition to the leaders of the Textile Labour Union : these latter demanded as a condition of serving a 50 per cent. representation on the committee.

Mass demonstrations and marches were organised; clashes with the police rapidly became more frequent, and many strikers were injured and arrests were made. In one of these clashes the police opened fire, killing one and wounding others on the pretext that the strikers were throwing stones at the mills. This, however, could not have been the case, because it took place at a distance of at least half a mile away from any mill. A court subsequently justified the action of the police.

At the time of writing the strike is still in full force though many workers, as has been the practice in previous strikes, have returned to their villages. The Millowners' Association have now issued an insolent notice dismissing all the strikers, that is they have declared a lock-out, and rejecting their demands as "impossible." They define the terms on which they will be allowed to resume work. These include "a full ten hours-day." *The Times*, of May 17, in reporting this, remarks that "both sides in the dispute appear to be stiffening."

### **The Lilloah Strike**

The strike of the railway shop workers at the Lilloah workshops of the East Indian Railway Company, near Calcutta, has been in some ways even more sensational. The story is a simple one. The East Indian Railway is a State-managed one, which has so far refused to recognise the existence of the Union. An all-round increase of 25 per cent. was demanded, calculated to bring the wages up to the level of the workshops of Lucknow and Lahore ; the minimum thus arrived at was no

more than 45 rupees per month. Another grievance, also a very common one, was concerned with the question of free quarters for the men, or allowances in lieu of accommodation.

Petitions were first presented as early as the middle of January, but the agent refused to grant any of their demands, and his recognition of the Union took the form of dismissing two of its most active members. A subsequent petition was also unsuccessful, and on March 3 four more men were summarily discharged, but after further protest reinstatement was promised. When it was seen that the Company only meant to reinstate four out of the six the workers' exasperation at being tricked was intense, and they retaliated with a stay-in strike. The following day, March 8, the works were closed by the order of the Company, and 14,000 men were locked out.

In spite of the Company's provocative behaviour the workers remained quiet but firm, but this policy did not commend itself to the authorities, who proceeded to interfere with a peaceful demonstration on March 28 on its return from holding a meeting at Bamangachi. First a baton charge by the police immediately followed with an assault by the military, in the course of which two strikers were shot down and numbers injured. The circumstances of this uncalled for attack have attracted a good deal of public attention owing to the censuring of the responsible officer, Captain Christie, by the District Magistrate at the official inquiry. According to this report no warning was given to the strikers, and the shots appeared to have been fired not at random but deliberately at particular individuals who were regarded as the leaders. More significant is the fact that killed and injured were shot in the back, supporting the workers' contention that so far from attempting to overpower the police and rush the loco yard, they were driven back by police and troops while proceeding peaceably across the Bamangachi railway bridge to their own houses.

This clash of forces undoubtedly intensified the class character of the struggle, and sympathetic action has been taken in most of the other departments and centres of the East Indian Railway—at Howrah, Kharagpur, &c.

## India : South Indian Railway Strike\*

For sometime the railway unions of India had been in a state of ferment, due to the tremendous retrenchment proposals put forward by the agents of the railways, which meant that at least 75,000 railway workers would be dismissed. An agitation was set on foot by the leaders of the various unions catering for the railway workers for a general strike, to prevent the proposals being put into operation.

At a meeting on June 16, the S.I. Railway workers decided to lay certain proposals before the agent requesting him to postpone the retrenchment proposals, which had been placed before the men. The following day a Strike Committee was elected and it was decided to organise a stay-in strike.

On June 28th Central Committee of the S. I. R. Union wired the agent requesting him to give a decision on points raised previously : The withdrawal of Circular 202 (dealing with retrenchment), increase of pay for unskilled and all-round increase in wages, and stating that failing a reply a stay-in-strike would take place in the shops on the line. The reply of the agent was to the effect that the retrenchment policy was the direct result of a Government inquiry. The next day, the workers at Negapatnam commenced a stay-in-strike. By 11 o'clock orders came through from the agent of the railway declaring a lock-out. Over 8,000 were affected at Negapatnam, Podamur, Golden Rock and Trichinopoly, and police were drafted in and placed at all the important centres.

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The Central Committee of the Union stated that the minimum demands of the workers would be :

- (1) All round increases of 25 per cent. in wages.
- (2) Minimum for gangmen to be Rs. 30.
- (3) Withdrawal of Circular 202.

Meanwhile several prominent Labour leaders condemned the strike action. S. V. Aiyar, editor of the *Indian Railway Magazine* and president of the M. and S. M. Railway Employees Union, states :

Capital has resources behind it....There is no strike fund and donations from Saklatvala and others from England will not feed 40,000 mouths.

Ernest Kirk, General Secretary of the Madras Labour Union condemned the strike action, and said :

"I am not against a strike, but if initiated and rushed and wire-pulled by adherents of Moscow it is severely handicapped from the outset."

Resolutions of protests were made at the workers' meetings against Aiyar for "betraying the interests of the workers." and Kirk for working against the Central Committee.

On July 6, a complete "Hartal" was observed at Trichinopoly. All business was suspended. The vegetable and grain markets remained closed in sympathy with the locked-out workers and a procession 3,000 strong marched through the town.

At all the other centres resolutions were passed calling for a general strike all along the line. Meanwhile, arrangements were made to call a conference of the A. I. Railway Federation. By this time preparations were being made to call a general strike for July 20. R. V. Naidu, president of the S. I. R. Employees Association, appealed to the workers not to participate; since "constitutional agitation is our watchword." But telegrams sent by the president of the Union were held up by the authorities as "being objectionable."

On the 18th, Pillai, president of the S. I. R. Labour Union, wrote the agent asking whether he agreed to accept Labour Commissioners or Arbitrators on the following points :

- (1) Lock-out wages.
- (2) Surplus to be absorbed after voluntary resignation.
- (3) Unskilled wages to be increased.
- (4) Running staff grievances.

The agent replied on the same day, stating that reductions were inevitable; that the question of pay was not one for arbitration, as the principle of no-work, no pay will be observed, that the unskilled rate of pay was fair and reasonable. He was prepared for negotiation or arbitration on the other matters, on condition that all agitation for a general strike ceased.

The reply was considered unsatisfactory and after another attempt to come to an agreement, it was decided that the strike should be called for on the 20th. The Labour weekly, *Thozilalee*, issued a strike supplement printed in red, wall-papers and leaflets were issued by the strike committee, but the labour leader, Ernest Kirk, warned the workers "not to be carried away by Communist ideas being imported into the Union."

On the 20th, the strike commenced. Practically all unskilled and night staff left duty. All work stopped at the central stations. The authorities replied to the strike by organised terrorism. The few trains that were running were escorted by reserve police with loaded guns. Meetings were dispersed, and at Korandi were prohibited within a radius of five miles. At Egmore forty men were served with notices prohibiting them from attending meetings. Within three days there were sixty-two arrests, and thirty men had been sent to the Shirjaki sub-jail.

At Mayavaram about 5,000 strikers lay on the rails and refused to let the Ceylon boat-train, under strong escort, pass. The police interfered and arrested nine, but the engine fires were put out. Later, about 8' 0 clock, the crowd of strikers increased at the station and some stone-throwing began. The police opened fire on the strikers and it is stated that five were killed, several injured and about fifteen arrested. At Tuticorin there was also firing by police and seven were

injured, and a shepherd named Kone was bayoneted and died later. Fourteen coolies were arrested. At Villupuram, when a train reached the station, it is stated that some stones were thrown, and the police in reply charged the crowd of strikers with drawn bayonets and fired buckshots. Six were killed and twenty-two wounded.

The *Forward* said of this incident that :

"The race of dividend hunters will easily detect in these violent actions the mystic hands of Moscow. But can outside influences work so much havoc upon men's minds as to make them lay open their hearts to the policemen's bullets?"

By the 25th D. K. Pillai, the president of the Central Committee, was arrested and searches made in the private residences of the Committee members and Union offices.

T. K. Naidu, secretary of the Engineering Workshop Labour Union, and a member of the Strike Committee was arrested on the 26th, and P. Mudalier and V. Aujar, general secretary and vice-president of the Central Committee, were arrested at Madura.

On the 26th the Strike Committee issued a statement denying charges of sabotage and agreeing to go to arbitration on the four points previously given.

V. Aujar, who had been released on bail, stated at a meeting on the same day that the strike was premature, and Ernest Kirk, in an interview, attacked the Strike Movement saying :

"The strike is due to the influence of Communists ... The militant Moscow virus has already got into the blood of several leading branch officers and members of the Central Committee... I would get into communication with the agent at once and agree to call off the strike provided he would be willing to resume negotiations."

The next day, the 27th, the Union secretary at Tinnevely, M. Pillai, without any instructions from the Central Committee called off the strike. Most of the strikers were unwilling to resume work and the action of Pillai was challenged, but a small number began work.

The same day, Narayanaswami, the secretary of the Podanur Branch Chari, the manger of *Thozilalee* office, and Arumugan, a member of the Strike Committee, along with R. Naidu, president of the Madras Branch and six strikers were arrested.

At Trichinopoly and Madura the strike was in full swing, but at other places a few had started work.

On the 30th Krishnamachari, the secretary, and Pillai, treasurer of the S. I. R. Local Labour Union, the only members of the Strike Committee left after the arrests, issued this statement:

"We have demonstrated to the public our capacity for organisation and concerted action... (but) we find that the public have suffered in this quarrel between Capital and Labour and we are very sorry that we were forced to go on strike much against our wishes ... relying on the justice of our cause we are determined to continue our fight by peaceful methods and with the sole aim of sparing the public all inconvenience, we have decided to call off the strike from 6 a.m. on the 30th."

Although the strike had been called off a large number were still out on August 1.

On the 2nd the agent stated that the whole staff were working. He also stated that the recognition given to the Union was withdrawn ; that no strike pay would be paid, adding that he had the full approval of the Government. No points are to be submitted to arbitration, but if there are some outstanding he will consider submitting them to the Commissioner of Labour.

The governing authorities did not intend to run any risks for even when Joshi, Giri and Naidu arrived at Negapatam, on August 7, they were prohibited from speaking or attending meetings within a radius of five miles.

A commentary on one cause of the collapse of the strike was made by Jhabwalla, who stated at a meeting on July 18, that the leaders of the strike had wired to him concerning concerted action by the G. I. P., the B. B., the C. I. and the



S. I. R. workers. He had immediately wired back asking them to wait until July 28. It appeared that the telegraphic communications were held up by the authorities. To his surprise the strike was declared on the 20th, and was bound to fail for want of organisation and support.

Since the calling off of the strike about twenty-seven strikers have been sentenced to six months' imprisonment, about thirty-six to three months and about forty-three others for periods of two to four months.

## *Appendix I*

# **Historical Facts about Formation of Indian National Congress in Mumbai in 1885\***

It was in the midst of these conditions that the establishment of the great Indian National Congress was conceived. Mr. Hume's idea was originally to allow provincial organisations like the Indian Association of Calcutta, the Presidency Association of Bombay, and the Mahajana Sabha of Madras to take up political questions, and the All-India National Union to concentrate more or less on social questions. He consulted Lord Dufferin who had recently come out as Viceroy, and the advice he gave cannot be better rendered than in the words of Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee who wrote in his 'Introduction to Indian Politics', published in 1898, as follows :

‘It will probably be news to many that the Indian National Congress, as it was originally started and as it has since been carried on, is in reality the work of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava when that nobleman was the Governor-General of India. Mr. A. O. Hume, C.B., had in 1884, conceived the idea that it would be of great advantage to the country if leading Indian politicians could be brought together once a year to discuss social matters and be upon friendly footing with one another. He did not desire that politics should form

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\* Excerpt from : ‘The History of the Indian National Congress’, written by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Vol. I, page 14-19 which reveals who were actually behind formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 and what was the purpose behind it. To project these historical facts on formation of Indian National Congress this chapter has been reprinted here.

part of their discussion, for, there were recognised political bodies in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of India, and he thought that these bodies might suffer in importance if, when Indian politicians from different parts of the country came together, they discussed politics. His idea further was that the Governor of the Province where the politicians met should be asked to preside over their deliberations, and that thereby great cordiality should be established between the official classes and the non-official Indian politicians. Full of these ideas he saw the noble Marquis when he went to Simla early in 1885, after Lord Dufferin had in the December previous assumed the Viceroyalty of India. Lord Dufferin took great interest in the matter and after considering over it for some time he sent for Mr. Hume and told him that, in his opinion, Mr. Hume's project would not be of much use. He said there was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition did in England. The newspapers, even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and their policy in Native circles, it would be very desirable in their interests as well as the interests of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved, and he added that an assembly such as he proposed should not be presided over by the Local Governor, for in his presence the people might not like to speak out their minds. Mr. Hume was convinced by Lord Dufferin's arguments and when he placed the two schemes, his own and Lord Dufferin's, before leading politicians in Calcutta, Bombay Madras, and other parts of the country, the latter unanimously accepted Lord Dufferin's scheme and proceeded to give effect to it. Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Mr Hume that his name in connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he

remained in the country, and his condition was faithfully maintained and none but the men consulted by Mr. Hume knew anything about the matter."

In March 1885, it was decided to hold a meeting of representatives from all parts of India at the ensuing Christmas. Poona was considered the most central and the most suitable place. From this meeting was issued the following circular:

A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885.

The Conference will be composed of Delegates—leading politicians well-acquainted with the English language—from all parts of the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

The direct objects of the Conference will be: (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

Indirectly, this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament, and if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions. The first Conference will decide whether the next shall be again held at Poona, or whether, following the precedent of the British Association, the Conference shall be held year by year at different important centres.

This year the Conference being in Poona, Mr. Chiplonkar and others of the Sarvajanik Sabha have consented to form a Reception Committee, in whose hands will nest the whole of the local arrangements. The Peshwa's Garden near the Parbati Hill will be utilised both as a place of meeting (it contains a fine Hall, like the garden, the property of the Sabha) and as a residence for the delegates, each of whom will be there provided with suitable quarters. Much importance is attached to this, since,

when all thus reside together for a week, far greater opportunities for friendly intercourse will be afforded than if the delegates were (as at the time of the late Bombay demonstrations) scattered about in dozens of private lodging houses all over the town.

Delegates are expected to find their own way to and from Poona, but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they again leave it, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food, etc., will be provided for them gratuitously.

The cost thus involved will be defrayed from the Reception Fund, which the Poona Association most liberally offers to provide in the first instance, but to which all delegates, whose means warrant their incurring this further expense, will be at liberty to contribute any sum they please. Any unutilised balance of such donations will be carried forward as a nucleus for next year's Reception Fund.

It is believed that, exclusive of our Poona friends, the Bombay Presidency, including Sindh and the Berars, will furnish about 20 delegates, Madras and Lower Bengal each about the same number, and the N. W. Province, Oudh, and the Punjab together about half this number,

Having already armed himself with the blessings of the Viceroy in India, Mr. Hume proceeded to England and consulted Lord Ripon, Lord Dalhousie, Sir James Caird, John Bright, Mr. Reid, Mr. Slagg and other eminent men before he started the Congress. Under their advice he organised what became the nucleus of the Indian Parliamentary Committee in England to act for India by obtaining pledges from candidates for Parliamentary election, not that they would help India but only that they would take interest in Indian affairs. He further arranged an Indian Telegraph Union to provide funds to send telegrams on important matters to leading Provincial papers in England, with which he arranged for their publication.

A graphic account of the 1st session of the Congress is given by Mrs Besant in her publication, 'How India Wrought for Freedom', and we are indebted to her for the following extracts there from:

"The first meeting did not, however, take place at Poona, for, only a few days before Christmas, some sporadic cases of cholera occurred, possibly presaging an outbreak, and it was thought wiser to move the Conference, now call the Congress, to Bombay. The Managers of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College and Boarding House placed the whole of their fine buildings at the disposal of the Congress, and all was ready by the morning of the 27th December for the reception of the Representatives of the Indian Nation. As we glance over the lists of those who were present, how many we see who became famous in the annals of India's struggle for Freedom! Among those who could not act as Representatives we note the Reformer, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, Deputy Collector of Madras; the Hon. Mr. Mahadev G. Ranade, then member of the Legislative Council and Small Cause Court Judge of Poona, later to be a Judge of the High Court of Bombay, leader honoured and trusted; Lala Baijnath of Agra was there, to be known as scholar and writer later on; and Professors K. Sundararaman and R. G. Bhandarkar. Among the Representatives may be noted Editors of well-known Indian papers, of *The Dyan Prakash*, *The Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha*, *The Maratha*, *The Kesari*, *The Nababibhakar*, *The Indian Mirror*, *The Nassim*, *The Hindusthani*, *The Tribune*, *The Indian Union*, *The Spectator*, *The Indu Prakash*, *The Hindu*, *The Crescent*. How many names shine out, familiar and honoured : Mr. A. O. Hume is there from Simla; W. C. Bonnerjee and Norendranath Sen from Calcutta; W. S.

Apte and G. G. Agarkar from Poona; Gangaprasad from Lucknow; Dadabhai Naoroji, K. T. Telang, Pherozeshah M. Mehta—then, as now, leader of the Bombay Corporation, D. E. Wacha, B. M. Malabari, N. G.

Chandavarkar, from Bombay; P. Rangiah Naidu, President of the Mahajana Sabha, S. Subrahmania Aiyar, P. Ananda Charlu, G. Subrahmania Aiyar, M. Viraraghavachariar, from Madras; P. Kesava Pillai from Anantapur. These are among the earliest who wrought for India's Freedom, and those yet on earth, are working for her still.

“At 12 noon, on December 28th, 1885, in the Hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, the First National Congress met. The first voices heard were those of Mr. A. O. Hume, the Hon. Mr. S. Subrahmania Aiyar and the Hon. Mr. K. T. Telang, who proposed, seconded and supported the election of the first President, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee. A solemn and historic moment was that in which the first of the long line of men thus honoured by the Motherland took his seat, to preside over her first National Assembly.

“After alluding to the representative and weighty character of the Congress, he laid down under four heads the objects of the Congress:

(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the various parts of the Empire.

(b) The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for Native politicians to labour in the public interests.

“The nine resolutions of the first National Congress mark the beginning of the formulation of India's demands:

The first asked for a Royal Commission to enquire into the working of Indian administration.

The second for the abolition of the India Council.

The third dealt with the defect of the Legislative Councils in which then all the members were nominated, and asked for the admission of elected members, for the right of interpellation, for the creation of Councils in the N.W.P. and Oudh, and in the Punjab, and for a Standing Committee in the House of Commons to consider formal protests from majorities in the Councils.

The fourth prayed for simultaneous examinations for the I.C.S. and the raising of the age of candidates.

The fifth and sixth dealt with Military expenditure.

The seventh protested against the annexation of Upper Burma and the proposed incorporation of it with India.

The eighth ordered the sending of the resolutions to political Associations, and they were discussed and passed all over the country by political bodies and public meetings, an admirable plan which has fallen into desuetude, they were carried with much enthusiasm, and here and there amended on minor points.

The final resolution fixed the next Congress at Calcutta, on 28th December, 1886.

In Calcutta, a political organisation of middle class Muslims was formed in 1885. It joined with two other groups in organising the second National Congress held that same year also in Calcutta. The Conference later gave way to the Congress. It is true that the 1st Congress of 1885 was attended by only 2 Muslims, the second at Calcutta 33, and 6th session at Calcutta in 1890 by 156 Muslims out of 702 delegates or 22 per cent.



# **India in Transition**

**M. N. Roy**

## **1. The Growth of the Bourgeoisie**

Contrary to the general notion, India is not under the feudal system. In India, feudalism was destroyed or more correctly speaking, undermined not by a violent revolution, as in Europe, but by a comparatively peaceful and gradual process. Feudalism as the basis of social economics received the first death-blow in the earlier years of the British possession in the middle of the 18th century, when the political power passed into the hands of the representatives of a foreign commerical bourgeoisie. In proportion as the British East India Company went on making the power of British commercial capital supreme in India, the foundation of the feudal system could not help being undermined. But it took the East India Company almost a hundred years to consolidate its supremacy all over the country. Therefore, though weakened, feudalism maintained its existence, at least in form, throughout this period. From the very beginning of the British occupation, the final proprietorship in land was taken away from the Indian land-owning class, either by force or by fraud, and was vested in the British Government. In other words, in place of the feudal lords, the representative of British commercial capital became the owner of the land.

The last vestiges of feudal power were shattered by the failure of the revolution of 1857, which is known as the Sepoy Mutiny. The revolution of 1857 was nothing but the last effort of the dethroned feudal potentates to

regain their power. It was a struggle between the worn-out feudal system and the newly introduced commercial capitalism for political supremacy. At the same time, when feudalism was crumbling down in Europe before the rising bourgeoisie a vibration of this great social struggle did not remain unfelt in India. But during the one hundred years preceding 1857, the normal economic development and the rise of the native bourgeoisie had been prevented in India by the following causes: First, the forcible export of more than 70 per cent of the accumulated wealth of India by the East India Company in order to help the industrial development of England. Second, the deliberate destruction of the craft industries and the consequent forcing of the artisan class back to the land, instead of into the modern machine industries, as in Europe. The craft industry was also in process of destruction in Europe, but the difference lay in the fact that, whereas in Europe it succumbed before a higher form of production, namely, the machine, which evolved as a new social force, in India the process of destruction was premeditated and violent. Indian craft industries did not die in order to give place to a higher form of production within the country. They were the victims of the industrial growth in England. But historically speaking, the broad results were the same, namely, the political power passed on to the hands of a new social class, controlling superior means of production, thus bringing about the undermining of the feudal system as an economic force and the destruction of the craft industries. Practically the whole country was brought directly under capitalist exploitation after the failure of the revolt of 1857. The Government of India was removed from the hands of the East India Company and transferred to the Crown.

Today India is divided into four distinct classes, namely:

- (i) the landed aristocracy, including the native chiefs,
- (ii) the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, (iii) the petty

peasantry, and (iv) the working class, including the landless peasants. Of the 17,328 big landowners, nearly 700 are classed in the category of Native States. Their chiefs are called Feudatory or Protected Wards of the British Government. One-third of the area of the entire country, or 709,555 square miles, is governed by these Chiefs, and is known as Native India. The biggest of these States is Hyderabad, or the Nizam's Dominions, which equals Italy in area, with 13,500,000 population. The smallest is limited to only five villages. The aggregate population of Native India is 72,000,000, a little less than one-fourth of the entire population of the country. The existence of these Native States is responsible for India's being called a feudal country. Theoretically, the Native Chiefs enjoy the sovereign power within their respective territories, but practically, they have no power whatever, much less do they constitute the backbone of the socio-economic structure of the country. The internal administration of none of these States is feudal; except a few, none of these ruling chiefs is directly descended from the feudal nobility of pre-British India. To all intents and purposes, they are puppets in the hands of the British Government. Besides the local and municipal administration, all these States are governed politically and militarily by the British, commercially and industrially by the native bourgeoisie. In fact, the native bourgeoisie has more influence in the government of the Native States than in the Government of India. All these States have Legislative Councils of their own, representing the local commercial and landowning class, and lately the industrial bourgeoisie is fast making itself supreme. But the autocrat in whom the absolute power is vested for all practical purposes is the Resident, who is the representative of the British Government. Originally, these Residents were sent to the Courts of the Native Princes as ambassadors of the British Government, but being the representative of the more advanced social class, namely, the bourgeoisie, these residents have in course of time become the arbiters of the

States. Therefore we see that even in these Native States where at least the shadow of feudalism still clings to a certain extent, it is the bourgeoisie which wields the political power.

In the internal administration of many of the larger Native States the progressive tendency of the bourgeoisie is more clearly manifested. In States like Mysore, Travancore, Baroda, Cochin etc., the percentage of illiteracy is much lower than in British India. Whereas in the latter primary education is not even free, in some of the Native States it is free and compulsory. In recent years, the industrialization of the country has been more rapid in the Native States than in British territories. The condition of the peasantry in these States is the same as in British India. In short, the remnants of feudalism are not to be found in the Native States any more than in the British territories, except in the courts of the pampered puppets.

The Native Chiefs, oppressed as they are by the British, are nevertheless conscious of the fact that their continued existence is doomed to destruction, and it is only by grace of the British Government that they are maintained as a conservative factor in the society. British power in India has never been based upon these scions of an extinct feudalism; on the contrary, it is the Government of India, representative of the British bourgeoisie, that maintains them grafted upon the social order. Consequently, they know very well that they owe their existence to the British power, so they are heart and soul pro-British, and will help the latter in any exigency, as was shown in the last war.

The remaining 16,628 of the above mentioned 17,328 big estate owners are also directly or indirectly connected with the feudal monarchs who ruled over India after the fall of the Mughal Empire. Thus they, together with the 700 Native Chiefs, constitute the landed aristocracy of India.

*These aristocrats, together with their families and dependent relations, number 540,175 out of a total population of 320,000,000. The total number of persons who live on land rent is 8,500,000, according to the census of 1911.*

Except for the 540,175 mentioned above, who belong to the aristocracy proper, the remaining eight million belong to the landholding class. The difference between the landowners and the landholders is that the former nominally own their estate under the protection of, or as feudatories of, the British Government and their properties are subject to the feudal laws of inheritance, being handed down from father to eldest son. The second class hold their land on permanent or temporary lease from the Government. The rent paid by them to the Government is sometimes permanently fixed, sometimes assessed periodically according to the changed valuation of the land.

The landholding class can be counted as old as the British Government in India. It rose out of the chaos which followed the fall of the Muslim Empire and preceded the consolidation of the British power. Its forerunners were the usurers and high officials of the latter years of the Muslim administration. In the last part of the 18th century the country was ravaged by widespread famines caused by the deliberate destruction of the craft industries, the unrestricted export of foodgrains, heavy fall in the total production of food-stuff owing to climatic conditions, the transfer of extensive areas of land to the cultivation of indigo and jute and the laying waste of large tracts due to the continued state of civil war. As a result of these things, the great bulk of the peasantry found itself heavily indebted, and their holdings fell into the hands of the usurers and former government officials who had accumulated a certain amount of capital. The East India Company, which in those days was unable to control alone the disturbed population because of its numerical weakness, encouraged the growth of *this class of landholders, who were allowed to hold the land on behalf of the Government, in whom the title of final ownership was vested.* Thus the elements that might have given rise to a native bourgeoisie were diverted from their natural development into a landholding class for the convenience of a foreign bourgeoisie who conquered the

political power and wanted to monopolize the right of exploiting the whole population. The modern Indian bourgeoisie is largely derived from this landholding class, which is investing its accumulated wealth more and more in commercial and industrial enterprises, now that the British government has been forced to change its policy of holding back the industrial development of India. The smaller landholders find it more profitable to get rid of their land and to invest their money in trade and commerce, and the result is a growing concentration of land in the hands of big capitalist concerns. This tendency towards concentration will be shown later on in detail in (page 470).

The Indian intellectuals who, together with the progressive element in the landholding class, form the basis of the modern bourgeoisie, are the creation of the British Government. Already in the earlier years of its rule, the British Government found out that it was more profitable to employ natives in the clerical and administrative posts of lower ranks than to bring out men from England for these works. Besides, it was necessary to depend on the Indians for the purpose of local administration. It was impossible that the numerous personnel required to maintain the cumbersome British bureaucracy in India could be recruited from the home country. On the other hand, the big British commercial firms in India needed the services of the cheaply paid clerks and other employees. For any one of these, in the earlier days of the British occupation, no less than fifty Indians could be hired for the amount of money required to be paid to an Englishman coming out of England. Therefore, modern education was introduced by the British Government in the second decade of the 19th century. Since then, the modern intelligentsia has been growing very rapidly, transcending the limit marked out for them by the foreign rulers, and capturing entirely the professions of medicine, law and teaching. Today, the English are practically ousted from these professions by the Indians. According to the

census figures of 1911, the number of people employed in public administration and professions amounted to 7,973,662. This figure does not include the clerks and employees of the commercial firms. These professions proved to be lucrative, and money began to be accumulated in the hands of the upper strata of the intellectual class. In 1850 the total accumulated wealth of this class, as shown in the investments in Government securities, amounted to £69,000,000. Since there was no industrial or other profitable means of investment, this whole amount was invested in Government securities. The total capital invested in native banks at that time amounted to £19,000,000. Land offered the only other form of profitable investment at this period, and the accumulated savings of this class were also invested in land leases, which were in the process of transfer from the hands of the big holders on account of their failure to meet higher government assessments, as well as from the small holders, because of their heavy indebtedness. Thus a considerable portion of land has been passing out of the control of the old conservative holders and into the hands of the more progressive rich intellectuals. This class of progressive landholders, which simultaneously is engaged in many instances in the lucrative liberal professions also, is rapidly marching itself in the ranks of the bourgeoisie proper, since in proportion as the capital accumulated in its hand grows, it extends its investments to industrial enterprises. Today in India are to be found numerous instances in which the rich landholder and industrialist are combined in the same person.

In the earlier years of British rule, there existed in India a great deal of inter-provincial activity in banking and commerce. This internal trade was completely destroyed by the introduction of the modern banking system and the establishment of British commercial houses in the first half of the 19th century. The result was that the prosperous Indian banking and merchant class was reduced to petty shopkeepers. After 1860 this inter-provincial commerce again

revived with the accumulation of wealth. The reason for this revival was the continued expansion of European capitalistic enterprise, which pushed the exploitation further and further into the country, in search of raw materials and a market for their manufactured goods, and created a class of Indian middlemen in the process. The growth in the volume of foreign trade led to the enrichment of this native mercantile class, which soon found itself in the possession of considerable capital for investment, but foreign trade and international banking being monopolized by the foreign ruling class, the Indian merchants found this way blocked to them and an outlet for their energy and capital was found in industrial enterprises. The first power-driven cotton mill was erected at Ahmedabad in 1851.

Modern industry owned by native capital remained insignificant in India till 1880. In that year there were 58 cotton textile mills with a paid-up capital of £3,832,000 and 22 jute textile mills with a capital of £2,246,000. The number of workers employed in these two industries was 68,000. Besides these and other private industrial enterprises, including native inter-provincial commerce and banking houses, there was £90,000,000 invested in savings banks and joint stock companies. This capital was all in the hands of the Indian mercantile class except for 0.02 per cent which was owned by English capitalists. Thus as far back as the eighties of the last century, Indian capitalism, as represented by the liberal professions and landholding class, and the Indian merchants and traders, was ready to enter into its industrial phase, but the foreign Government was opposed to it. The imperial capital of Britain wanted to hold India as a source of raw materials and as a market for finished goods. Consequently, the young native machine industry was subjected to special taxations which seriously checked its growth, and in many cases, ruined it in the very beginning. But the cheapness of raw materials and labour kept the textile mills going, in spite of the fact that they were the main object of governmental attack.



The increasing wealth of the intellectuals and the absence of profitable means of investment made them discontented with the British Government. Finding it beneath their dignity to carry on trade, and industrial outlets being denied by the Government, land and Government securities were the only remaining sources of investment left to this class. The interest on securities was very low, being but 3 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. It was not at all attractive for an ambitious class. Neither was the income from land investments very high. Besides, the area of productive land being comparatively limited, no very large scope was presented. The native capitalist class was excluded from building railways, tramways, exploiting mines and other industries whose development was not obstructed by the Government. All these industries were the monopoly of English capital. The liberal professions were overcrowded, so the rich intelligentsia found its further economic development blocked on all sides. The British Government was seen to be the cause of all this, and there arose the necessity of fighting against it. Economic necessity forced the intellectual bourgeoisie to begin its political struggle, which was initiated in the form of the Indian National Congress, whose first session was held in 1885 in Bombay, under the presidency of W.C. Bonnerjee, a rich lawyer who had his savings invested in commercial and industrial enterprises. The object of this political movement was manifest—it was to replace or at least to curtail the power of the British Government, which was standing in the way of the economic development of the bourgeoisie. This movement was headed by rich lawyers, merchants, mill-owners, physicians etc., or in other words, that progressive element of the society which possessed capital to be invested.

In the last years of the 19th century, the power of Indian capital went on growing, though rather slowly, because of the fact that it was denied the outlet of industrial development. Nevertheless, since there was a

class with money to be invested, and great masses of people were looking for employment, having been deprived of their land and of their ancient handicraft occupations, industries kept growing despite all obstructions created by the Government.

The big landholders of the province of Bengal enjoy a privileged position under the Permanent Settlement introduced in 1793. According to this system, they pay a fixed scale of taxation, their holdings being exempt from new assessments. According to the Bengal Tenancy Act, the cultivators to whom the big landholders leased out their lands, enjoy the right of occupancy. As a result, the agricultural production of the province of Bengal has always been high, and the rental value of land increased enormously. But the Permanent Settlement prevented the Government from participating directly in this increased land value. A means to nullify the effects of the Permanent Settlement was found in the partition of Bengal in 1905. By this partition, the eastern half of the province, containing the rich rice producing area, was placed under the administration of a newly created Provincial Government, with the power to revise the old system of taxation. Thus arose a new conflict between the Government and the rich landholding class which, as stated before, contained a large number of intellectuals.

The unification of landed and capitalist interest as against British rule, was achieved. In 1905 the political movement of the Indian bourgeoisie as represented by the Indian National Congress, backed by the progressive landholding class, used the economic weapon of boycott against British capitalism. The 25th session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1906, under the presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji, also a rich merchant lawyer, declared a boycott of English goods until the Partition of Bengal Act was repealed. The economic power of the Indian bourgeoisie, composed of the intellectuals, mercantile capitalists, liberal landholders, and the

industrial capitalists, had acquired sufficient strength to enable it to declare an open struggle against the foreign capitalistic monopoly.

The number of factories in 1905 amounted to 2,688. Of these, only 718 were non-power, the rest being either steam- or electricity-driven. The textile industry had grown to count upon 178 weaving mills, with a capital of £10,762,000, and 750 ginning mills owned by individual capitalists (figures for capital invested not available). The jute industry counted 38 mills for weaving, with a capital of £5,393,358, and 100 pressing mills owned by private capital. According to the Government statistics the capital of joint-stock companies registered in India, engaged in industrial enterprise amounted to £57,000,000. The amount of capital invested in industries had increased almost ten-fold since 1880, whereas investment in Government securities had increased by only £4,000,000 the total amount being £94,616,740, during the same period. With industrial development, Indian capital also began to create modern banking institutions. In 1905 there existed in India nine banks with Indian capital. These were in addition to the native banking firms based on usury. There were six woollen mills and seven paper factories.

The theory on which the boycott movement was based was that this growing native industry should be protected and stimulated in order to increase the national wealth, the only way of improving the economic condition of the people, according to the bourgeois reasoning of that epoch. Owing to the fact that Indian industry was too new and weak to hold its own in a competition with British capitalism, the object of the boycott movement was not attained. British goods could not be thrown off the market, simply because Indian industries were not able to produce the amount needed for consumption. But the Government found it necessary to recognize the strength of the bourgeoisie. In 1909, the Morley-Minto Reforms were introduced, conceding to this class some nominal

share in the administration of the country. For the first time, an Indian was appointed in the Viceroy's Executive Council, which corresponded to the board of advisers of an autocratic monarchy. The choice fell on one of the premier lawyers, who was at the same time a rich landholder. The number of elected members in the Legislative Councils, both Imperial and Provincial, was increased. Special electorates were conceded to the landholding class as well as to the Muslim bourgeoisie. A Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the possibility of increasing the percentage of the native element in the public services. In 1911 the first phase in the political struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie culminated in the repeal of the Act of the Partition of Bengal. The Indian bourgeoisie was very much encouraged by its first political victory. It kept on the struggle until a year later the Government of India had to declare through the mouth of the King-Emperor, who visited India expressly for this purpose, that self-government would be conceded to the Indian people at the earliest possible moment.

Nor was the victory of the bourgeoisie in the industrial field altogether negligible. In 1908, the number of cotton weaving mills had increased to 212, with a proportionate increase in the amount of capital invested therein. The number of jute mills (weaving) also increased to 56, with about 50 per cent increase in the invested capital. In both these industries, a small percentage of English capital had always been invested, but after 1905 the proportion as well as the actual amount of English capital invested in these industries showed a noticeable decrease. Besides the cotton and woollen textile industry, which benefited most by the boycott movement, a general impetus was felt in the industrial field as a whole. New industries were started, and existing ones extended and modernized. The following industries felt the impetus most: coal-mining, glass-making, matches, flour and rice-milling, oil mills,

tanning, leather manufacture, metal works, pottery, soap, pencil, paper, dyeing, etc.

The number of joint-stock companies increased from 1,530 in 1905 to 2,061 in 1910. The amount of capital invested in industrial enterprises was calculated at £72,800,000 in 1908 and £108,606,000 in 1910. The number of banks owned by Indian capital increased to 14 and 16 respectively. The industrial and commercial concerns run with private capital, about which no figures are available, also showed a great increase. The iron and steel industry received a great impetus when in 1907 the Tata Iron and Steel Company was organized with a capital hitherto unprecedented in India.

Urged on by its initial political victories, the Indian bourgeoisie went on consolidating its position economically. Although it was not until the Great European War that Indian capital received the fullest opportunity to assert itself, a considerable amount of industrial and commercial activity was felt all over the country in the years preceding the war. The growth of modern industry is shown by the fact that the value of machinery imported in the year 1914 amounted to nearly £10,000,000. Besides, in the same year, two and a half million pounds sterling worth of parts of machinery were manufactured in India. In 1914, the capital invested in Government securities amounted to £121,500,000, drawing interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 per cent, whereas there were 2,545 joint-stock companies with an aggregate capital of £113,396,000. The figures for the capital invested in the privately owned industrial enterprises are not available.

The war opened up a new era for the Indian bourgeoisie. The necessity for mobilizing her entire industrial strength for the production of war materials, combined with the dislocation of marine transport, owing firstly to the transfer of merchant vessels to naval purposes and secondly to the submarine warfare, made it impossible for England to keep the Indian market supplied with manufactured goods. This

placed the Indian manufacturers in an unexpectedly advantageous position. The overwhelming competition of the imperial capital was suddenly removed and Indian capital was presented with a free field of development. But this was not all. The British Government itself, which so far had persistently followed the policy of keeping India industrially backward, found it necessary to change its policy. Since the beginning of the century, there had been growing discontent in the country. In the years preceding the war, this discontent had become widespread and acute because of the increasing poverty of the masses and the enormous growth in the number of unemployables among the intelligentsia. So at the outbreak of the war, things looked rather threatening in India. Attempts were made to overthrow British rule by organizing armed uprisings. Signs of revolt appeared among the Indian troops. The political movement for national liberation, originally started under the auspices of the wealthy intellectuals and growing bourgeoisie, had been largely captured by the so-called Extremists, whose ranks were swelled by the lower strata of middle-class intellectuals. Terroristic societies had been active since 1904. The tendency towards complete separation of India from the British Empire by means of a violent revolution was no longer confined within the secret revolutionary organizations. It began to spread among the ranks of the Extremists, who constituted the Left Wing of the Indian National Congress.

There were two factors behind the political movement in India. First, the rise of a class which had accumulated a considerable amount of capital in its hands and which wanted to have the right of participating in, if not monopolizing, the exploitation of the natural riches and labour power of the country. Second, the growing poverty and the existence of a great number of unemployed and unemployables due to the intensive and extensive exploitation by foreign capital, which so far had found it profitable to keep the country industrially undeveloped. Both

these factors were working against the British rule. But socially speaking, they were contradictory to one another. The fact that they had a common enemy to fight made it possible for them to unite, and a united effort of these two factors would bring about the destruction of British rule. To prevent this union was naturally the desire and purpose of the British Government. Among the bourgeoisie was found the element which could be won over, or at least whose actions could be moderated by means of political concessions. But in India, the bourgeoisie of 1916 was not the same as in 1909. It was no longer possible to placate it with hollow political and administrative privileges. It wanted economic concessions, a share in the exploitation of the country.

In the first years of the war, Japan began to capture a considerable part of the Indian market, formerly supplied by English manufacturers. It was practically impossible for the British capitalists to keep the Japanese goods out of the Indian market. All these internal and external reasons taken together made the British Government take the Indian bourgeoisie into confidence. In the very beginning of the war, the promise of giving India self-government was repeated, provided India would help England in the prosecution of the war. As self-government means the transfer, wholly or partially, of the administration of the country to the Indian bourgeoisie, this promise won the active support of the propertied class to the cause of the war. Hoping to gain at least a considerable control over the government of the country, this class suspended its political struggle and helped the British Government in the recruitment of Indian troops and in discouraging the nationalist movement, now led by the lower middle class. These valuable services were paid by the granting of a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent import duty on cotton imports in 1916. This was a protection granted to the principal industry of India, and it meant such an economic concession to the bourgeoisie that the latter readily helped the

**Government of India to raise a war fund of £100,000,000 as a gift to England. The immediate effect of this was that the amount of capital invested in the textile factories owned by registered joint-stock companies rose to £24,500,000 in 1917, the number of mills being 276. Besides, there were 1,800 cotton ginning factories and a considerable number of weaving factories owned by individual capitalists or private companies. Since 1880 up to 1917, the cotton textile industry had increased 375 per cent in the amount of capital invested, 792 per cent in looms, and 411 per cent in spindles employed, the all-round increase being 427 per cent. By the year 1917, India could produce the entire quantity of yarn needed for her textile industries and half the amount of textile-woven goods, or in other words, the native production was 94.6 per cent of the imports as compared with 42 per cent in the years preceding the war. In 1917, India produced 1,614,216,458 yards of woven cotton goods valued at £18,100,000, besides a considerable quantity of yarn of great value.**

**The average total capital of companies registered every year from 1910 to 1914 was approximately £12,000,000. The figure rose to £18,000,000 in 1917-18; and in the two years following the conclusion of war, it reached the enormous height of £183,000,000 and £100,000,000 respectively. Of course, these figures, especially the latter ones, do not represent the actual amount paid up on registering the companies; but they signify nevertheless the large industrial and commercial prospect the promoters had in view. Besides, this capital inflation was intended to give a tolerable appearance to the extraordinary rates of dividends paid to the shareholders.**

**The profit made by the Indian industries in the last few years is veritably fabulous. Cheap ignorant and unorganized labour, together with an abundance of easily available raw materials enables the owner to make such excessive profits. The average dividend paid by the**



important cotton mills in 1920 was 120 per cent, the highest figure being as much as 365 per cent. The number of mills coming under this category is quite large. The actual profit made in some of these mills came up to 500 per cent, if the habit of capital inflation so frequently indulged in by the Indian companies is taken into consideration. The average rate of dividends paid by the jute mills in the same years was still higher, being not less than 140 per cent. One concern, the Hooghly Mills of Calcutta, paid as much as 400 per cent. In many other industries, for example, tea plantation and manufacture, coal and gold mining, leather works, etc., the rate of profit, if not so high, is also very considerable. The average in the collieries is 90 per cent. From this it is very easy to imagine the rapidity with which the Indian capitalist class is enriching itself. The inevitable result of this enormous profiteering is the accentuated growth of industries, because the profit is constantly increasing the capital ready for new investment.

The economic and industrial condition of the country in 1917 may be well appreciated from the following facts. There were more than 36,135 miles of railways, light railways not included, owned almost exclusively by English capital, a considerable portion of the light railways being Indian-owned. The number of workers employed on the railways including the industries directly allied with them, was 1,500,000. There were altogether about 9,000 industrial establishments, employing more than 2,000,000 workers. Over four thousand of these were driven by steam or electric power. There were 1,800 tea and coffee plantations, employing 900,000 workers. Great activity was shown in coal, petroleum, manganese, mica, iron and gold mining. The amount of business transacted through the principal ports and dockyards can be estimated from the fact that no less than 1,000,000 workers were employed. In 1919 the total profit made in the cotton, jute, woollen, paper, mining and leather

industries was £45,000,000. The gross income of the railways was £77,600,000. It should be remembered that the amount of capital invested in the English-owned industries like railways, etc., is not taken into account here.

Great impetus was felt in the jute industry also. In 1917, the number of mills rose to 78 and the capital invested to 13,215,000 pounds. The amount of Indian capital invested in this industry has increased by 311 per cent since 1914. The entire industry has grown by 362 per cent in volume, and 528 per cent in capital since 1880. Manufactured jute exported in 1917-18, was valued at £30,000,000—34 times more than the export of 1880. The woollen mills produced goods worth £1,405,000 in 1917 as against £400,000 in 1913. The production of paper mills increased to £1,253,000 from £545,000 during the same period.

In 1917, India produced 18,200,000 tons of coal whereas the total consumption for that year amounted to 17,849,000 tons. The increase in the coal output was 2,000,000 tons more than the 1913 output. In the same year, the coal exported from India amounted to 408,117 tons worth £253,000. The consumption of coal in Indian industries for that year was 9,000,000 tons, as against 10,326,000 tons in the Japanese industries, exclusive of her merchant marine. The petroleum output of India in 1917-18 was 288,759,523 gallons valued at £1,093,000. Of this, only 139,000,000 gallons were consumed in the country, leaving the rest for export.

Indian commerce grew in proportion too. Of late Indian merchants are taking an increasing part in overseas commerce. She has become a competitor in the markets of the Dutch Indies, Malay Peninsula, East Africa, Afghanistan and, to a certain extent, China. She supplies these markets with manufactured or partially manufactured cotton goods. Her export of finished goods is increasing, whereas the export of raw materials, especially jute and cotton, is decreasing.

That the Indian bourgeoisie has not been slow to seize the opportunity presented to it by the war conditions and the changed economic policy of the British Government is proved in the following table, which shows the percentage of the decrease in the investment of Indian capital in Government securities as against increase in the various industrial pursuits.

	1914	1917	1918	1919	1920
Government Securities	100	70	67	74	62
Banks	100	106	112	116	137
Municipal Debts	100	89	84	84	81
Jute Mills	100	311	467	383	563
Cotton Mills	100	132	162	167	386
Woollen Mills	100	106	125	125	187
Coal Mines	100	136	134	157	149
Tea	100	137	125	123	136
Flour Mills	100	137	206	238	406
Iron and Steel	100	332	295	284	207

The change in the economic policy of the British Government was marked by the appointment in 1916 of the Indian Industrial Commission, with the object of finding the best means of fomenting the industrial development of the country. The Commission constituted ten members, out of which four were Indians, one being a leader of the Right Wing of the Indian National Congress, which is the political organ of the bourgeoisie, and the other three were the premier industrialists of the country. The Commission was instructed to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India and to submit its recommendation with special reference to the following questions:

"A. Whether new openings for the profitable employment of Indian capital in commerce and industry can be indicated

B. Whether, and if so, in what manner, Government can usefully give direct encouragement to industrial development: (1) by rendering technical advice more freely available, (2) by the demonstration of the practical possibility on a commercial scale of particular industries, (3) by affording, direct or indirectly, financial assistance to industrial enterprises, or (4) by any other means which are not incompatible with the existing fiscal policy of the Government of India''.

The Commission completed its work and submitted a lengthy report in 1918. The following are the features of the recommendations contained in the report: (1) that in future Government must play an active part in the industrial development of the country; (2) that India produces all the raw materials necessary for the requirements of a modern community, but is unable to manufacture many of the articles and materials essential alike in times of peace and war; therefore it is vital for the Government to ensure the establishment in India of those industries whose absence exposes us to grave danger in the event of war; (3) that modern methods should be introduced in agriculture so that labour now wastefully employed would be set free for industries; (4) that universal education should be introduced, but that it would be unfair and unjust to impose upon employers this duty which devolves rather upon the State; (5) that institutions for technical and mechanical training should be introduced widely; (6) that the policy of *laissez faire* in industrial affairs to which the Government clung so long should be abandoned; (7) that the establishment of Industrial banks should be encouraged by means of Government financing if necessary; (8) that the necessity of securing the economic safety of the country and the inability of the people to secure it without the co-operation of the Government are apparent; therefore the Government must adopt a policy of energetic intervention in industrial affairs.

The political expression of the British Government's reconciliation with the Indian bourgeoisie is in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme. Taking advantage of the unexpected opportunity presented to it by the war conditions of 1917-18, the Indian capitalist class acquired such a secure economic position that it was no longer possible for the Government to ignore it. To revive after the war the old policy of obstructing the industrial growth of the country would surely force the Indian bourgeoisie, which had developed its political consciousness and organizations sufficiently, to place itself actively at the head of the revolutionary movement which was spreading wider and wider throughout India. The only way of preventing such a catastrophe was to devise means for divorcing the political ambition of the bourgeoisie from the spontaneous revolutionary upheaval among the masses. Already in 1911, the Indian bourgeoisie had been promised self-government, a promise which was repeated in the beginning of the European war in order to win its support. The war was over. The Indian bourgeoisie had stood faithfully by the British Government. The time had come when some considerable concessions had to be made to it. These concessions were made by the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, whose principal features were as follows: (1) The control of the British Parliament over the Government of India exercised through the Secretary of State for India was modified. (2) The number of Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council was increased. (3) The system of dual chamber was introduced in the Legislature and the number as well as proportion of elected Indian members was increased. (4) The franchise was so extended as to embrace all owning property exceeding a certain minimum. (5) The actual power of law-making which had so far been vested in the Executive was partially conceded to the Legislature. (6) Indian ministers were appointed to assist the provincial Governors, these members being recruited from the leaders of the moderate

nationalists. (7) The size as well as power of the provincial Legislature was also extended. (8) The number of Indian elements in the superior posts of the Civil Service was increased to 33 per cent. (9) New facilities were provided for entering the Civil Service by holding the examinations in India as well as in England. (10) The difference between the scale of salaries of the Indian and English officials was reduced. (11) Municipal administration was given over to the local bourgeoisie to a great extent.

But the remarkable feature of this Reform which is said to have brought a new political era to India, is the economic concessions made to Indian capital. The following passages quoted from the Reform Scheme speak for themselves.

“As the desirability of industrial expansion became clearer, the Government of India fully shared the desire of the Indian leaders to secure the economic advantages that would follow the local manufacture of raw products. English theories as to the appropriate limits of the State's activity are inapplicable to India. We believe that this is true in case of industries, and that if the resources of the country are to be developed the Government must take action. We feel no surprise that there remained a feeling of bitterness among the advanced parties. The people have recognized their inability to carry out their programme (of industrial development) without the help and guidance of the Government. The war has created a new position. The prohibition of imports from enemy countries was welcomed as giving India an opportunity of replacing foreign articles by home products. After the war, the need for industrial development will be all the greater, unless India is to become a mere dumping ground for the manufacturers of foreign nations, which will then be competing all the more keenly for the markets on which their political strength so perceptibly depends. India will certainly consider herself entitled to claim all the help that the Government can give her to enable her to take her place as a manufacturing

country. On all grounds, a forward policy in industrial development is urgently called for, not merely to give India economic stability, but in order to satisfy the aspirations of her people, who desire to see her stand before the world as a well-poised, up-to-date country; in order to provide an outlet for the energies of her youths, who are otherwise drawn exclusively to government services or to a few overstocked professions; and in order that money now lying unproductive may be applied to the benefit of the whole community. Imperial interests also demand that the natural resources of India should henceforth be better utilized. "We cannot measure the access of strength which an industrialized India will bring to the power of the Empire. Mere traders may be disposed to regard each new source of manufacture as a possible curtailment of their sources of profit. But each new acquisition of wealth increases the purchasing power of the whole. The war has thrown a strong light on the military importance of economic development. Nowadays the products of an industrially developed community coincide so nearly with the catalogue of munitions of war that the development of India's natural resources becomes a matter of almost military necessity. We believe that this consideration is not a matter of indifference to India's political leaders; and that they are anxious to see India self-supporting in respect of military requirements. The government must admit and shoulder its responsibility for furthering the industrial development of the country.

"We have been assured that Indian capital will be forthcoming once it is realized that it can be invested with security and profit in India; a purpose that will be furthered by the provision of increased facilities for banking and credit. The real enthusiasm for industries, which is not confined to the ambitions of a few individuals but rests on the general desire to see Indian capital and labour applied jointly to the good of the country, seems to us of the happiest augury."

This rather long quotation is reproduced because herein are indicated the reasons which forced the British capitalist class not only to recognize the Indian bourgeoisie as a factor to be taken into consideration, but to help it develop by conceding it the position of junior partnership in the exploitation of India. The object behind this remarkable change of policy on the part of British imperialism was to split the revolutionary movement by making clear to the bourgeoisie that it was no longer impossible for it to realize its ambitions under British rule. The opportunity to develop as an economically powerful class was what the Indian bourgeoisie was striving after; their political movement was a struggle to conquer this right. The economic and industrial advancement secured during the war was strengthened by the declaration of change in the governmental policy, and the Indian capitalist class entered a period of spectacular development from 1918. The growth of industries was very rapid and commerce extended enormously.

In 1918-19 the capital invested in joint-stock companies was £255,000,000 as against £135,000,000 in 1913-14. Besides, there were 3,600 factories owned by private capital whereas in 1913-14 the number of factories owned by private capital was 1,300. The amount of wealth accumulated in the hands of the bourgeoisie as shown by the investment in Government securities—to find a profitable investment of which wealth was the principal burden of the commissions appointed and reforms introduced by the government—rose to £359,000,000 in the same year.\* As a result, a considerable development took place in the industries of jute and cotton textiles, engineering, iron and steel, coal-mining, etc. Another factor helped the transfer of a large capital from trade and commerce to industries during the war. This was the closing down of German and Austrian firms, which used to carry on a large export and

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\* One hundred years ago, i.e. in 1820, the same class had only £20,000,000 invested in government securities.



import trade in raw and manufactured products through the Indian middleman.

With the growth of the native industries, a considerable change took place in the sea-borne trade. In the imports, an increase was shown in machineries, while there was a decrease in cotton textiles. The amount of raw materials exported decreased. According to the report of the Director of Commercial Intelligence, the volume of foreign trade of India was valued at £600,000,000 in 1920 as against one-sixth this amount twenty years ago; the greatest increase in imports was in machinery and kerosene. In presenting his report, the Director-General said: "India's purchasing power must be developed by developing her industries. Manufactured and partly-manufactured goods are of greater value than of raw materials. This tendency has been marked in the last years. Manufactured jute is exported. A great portion of the oil-seeds are crushed and the oil exported. Thus, India has been capable of buying more machinery and other foreign goods for her industrial development."

The amount of manufactured cotton imported in 1920 showed a decrease of 60 per cent in the quantity of yarn and 36.5 per cent in the quantity of woven goods as compared with 1914. In 1920, cotton goods constituted 28 per cent of the total import of India, whereas in 1914, it was over 50 per cent. On the other hand, the export of raw materials has decreased by 19 per cent. In the pre-war period, India used to import a considerable amount of railway materials but in the last years, an increasing part of her demand is being met by native industry. The contract to supply steel rails to one state railway and to two other systems owned by English companies has been given to the Tata Iron and Steel Company, an Indian firm.

Jute, raw and manufactured, used to form a great part of India's export trade, being 24 per cent of the total. A great change has taken place in this. The export of raw jute in 1919-20 was only 77 per cent of that of 1913-14. At the present time, nearly 75 per cent of the raw produce is

consumed in the local mills as against 50 per cent in the pre-war years.

The export of raw cotton decreased by 22 per cent in 1920 as against 1914, whereas the increase in the export of cotton woven goods was 120 per cent. The total production of the cotton textile industry rose by 41 per cent. The latest figures as to the growth of the Indian manufacturing industry are not available, but it is generally held that the industrial capital of India today is 2,000 per cent greater than in the pre-war days.

This vast increase of wealth of the Indian bourgeoisie has not been achieved by depriving British capital of the full benefit of imperial exploitation. We will see in the next chapter that with the increase in the wealth of the bourgeoisie, the poverty of the masses has also increased. Today the bourgeoisie in India is not a negligible factor. If the British Government is trying to win it over to its own side, this is because it can no longer suppress it or ignore it as a socio-economic factor. But on the other hand, in comparison with the vastness of the country and its population, as well as in competition with the imperial capital, the Indian bourgeoisie cannot help being conscious of its weakness. Therefore, its political tactics are determined by the desire to acquire concessions and support from the British Government, in order to further its own development. It does not as yet feel itself strong enough to challenge the right of the British Government to be in India, but by virtue of its increasing wealth and rapidly concentrating capital in industrial enterprises, it has grown into a political power, so much so that the Government has to recognize it as such. The Government has made political as well as economic concessions, not because it finds in the new Indian bourgeoisie a mortal enemy, but because the growing revolutionary movement among the masses is forcing upon the authorities the necessity of compromising with that section of the people which is closer to themselves

by class interest. The Government is willing to admit the Indian bourgeoisie to a junior partnership in the exploitation of the country, but the Indian capitalist class, which already controls 75 per cent of the industry (excepting railways, mining and plantation) as well as a big share in the commerce, is not satisfied with this.

The more the British Government makes concession to the Indian bourgeoisie, the more ambitious the latter becomes. It knows quite well that it is necessary to make compromises with the imperial capital, till the time comes when it will be in a position to openly contend for the right of monopoly of exploitation with the foreigner. But it also knows that British imperialism cannot be overthrown without the help of the masses. So to deceive the workers, whose revolutionary consciousness is steadily growing, owing to their increased poverty, which is accentuated by the concentration of wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the latter has thrown open the doors of the Indian National Congress to the masses. But at the same time, by declaring the boycott of British goods for the second time, the Indian bourgeoisie shows its tendency to aggrandize itself at the cost of the people. In the Indian bourgeoisie as well as in the masses, are to be found the objective forces making for a revolution. But these two factors are divided by class interest and this class differentiation is growing and is bound to grow wider in proportion to the further development of the Indian bourgeoisie. Both the forces are solidifying themselves in their own way : the masses in the growing number of trade unions and peasant movement ; the bourgeoisie in the political movement expressed by the National Congress. The fact that the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi, succeeded in raising more than 10,000,000 rupees in three months for a National Fund demonstrates the growing solidarity of the Indian bourgeoisie. The All-India Muslim League, founded in 1905 under the auspices of the Government, to marshal the Muslim capitalists and landed aristocracy in a political

opposition to the Indian National Congress (originally composed of the Hindu elements of the population with a sprinkling of liberal Muslim intellectuals), has abandoned its original role and merged itself into the national movement of the Indian bourgeoisie as a class. In short, to-day the latter constitutes a social class economically and politically well-knit, conscious of its historic mission. Undoubtedly, it is going to be at the vanguard of that national upheaval which will overthrow foreign rule, but the more class-conscious it becomes, the more it will lose the power to deceive the masses. The more the country develops economically and industrially, under the leadership of the native capitalist class, the wider will grow the class cleavage. Therefore, to rely on the national solidarity under purely bourgeois leadership for the purpose of destroying British rule in India may not be always safe. The overthrow of the British rule will be achieved by the joint action of the bourgeoisie and the masses, but how this joint action can be consummated still remains a question. It will be easier to solve this problem when the condition of the masses is analysed, in order to understand what a great gulf divides these two revolutionary factors.

## **2. The Condition of the Rural Population**

In 1911 the total population of India was 315,000,000. This showed an increase of 21,000,000 over the figure of 1901, when the population amounted to 294,000,000. But a study of the census statistics shows that the actual increase by births was but 10,000,000, the remainder being due to more efficient methods of taking the census, and to the inclusion of new territories within the census area. Thus the actual increase of the population of the country could not be called high, nor even normal in comparison with that of the European countries. The cause of this low birth-rate is to be looked for in the chronic poverty of the rural population. Many statisticians, both official and non-official, have testified to the

fact that the great bulk of the agricultural population lives in a state of perpetual starvation. According to Sir William Digby, who held various high posts in the Indian Civil Service for twenty-five years, more than fifty per cent of the entire agricultural population never have their hunger satisfied once in their lives. Sir Charles Eliot, former provincial Governor of Bengal, declared that 40,000,000 of the inhabitants of India never get one full meal a day. Such testimony can be added *ad infinitum*, while the history of Indian famines is known to all the world. Instances are not rare in which millions of people are swept away by famine and the resulting pestilences. According to Government estimates, 6,000,000 people died in 1918 of Spanish influenza (non-official estimates place the total mortality for that year from famine and disease at 32,000,000).

Although detailed statistics of the 1920-21 census are not yet available, the present population is estimated at nearly 320,000,000. This figure shows an increase of less than five million in the last ten years, despite the fact that the methods of census taking have become more accurate, and the limits of census area have been extended to include outlying border districts.

Indian nationalists of all shades of opinion unite in declaring British imperialism responsible for all these evils, and the precarious condition of the people is laid solely at the door of the present governmental abuses. Their idea of a panacea for all these ills lies in the termination of foreign rule and the establishment of an autonomous or independent government. Their attitude can be summed up in the words of Sir Surendranath Bannerji, one of the veteran leaders of the Indian National Congress, who at its session held in Lucknow in 1916 said : "I have demonstrated that we are the natural leaders of the masses, the protectors of their interests, and those interests will be safe, far more safe in our hands, than in those of the foreign bureaucracy."

Nobody can minimize the disastrous effects of British imperialism upon the Indian people, but in their political agitation, based consciously or unconsciously upon class interest, the Indian nationalists neglect to investigate other causes which are also responsible for the present condition of the agricultural population and which will continue after the termination of foreign rule, unless and until far-reaching changes in the present mode of production are brought about.

In 1911, 280,000,000 of the entire Indian population lived in villages and small towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants. But there existed a general tendency towards decrease in the rural population and an increase in that of the towns, especially of the great industrial cities. For example, in the ten years ending in 1911, the population of the city of Calcutta showed an increase of 14 per cent, that of Bombay 25 per cent, and of Ahmedabad 16 per cent, whereas the population of religious centres, in which there is always a great number of people engaged in non-productive professions, decreased—Benares by 5 per cent, Mathura by 4 per cent etc. The urban population in 1911 was 35,000,000. There were thirty cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, but in the last decade this distribution has greatly changed. An increase is to be noted in the population of the newly-grown industrial centres. The growth of several of the principal urban industrial districts has been almost spectacular, as for instance, the population of the city of Calcutta, which rose from 1,300,000 in 1911 to 1,800,000 at the beginning of the war, and at present it is estimated at over 2,000,000. The growth of Bombay has been still more rapid, proportionately, if not in actual numbers.

Taking into consideration the vastness of the country and its population, India still remains predominantly agricultural despite the rapid development of industry in recent years. Since the production is mainly agricultural, the economic condition of that part of the population

engaged in an industry so important is necessarily a determining factor in the national life. Therefore, the forces and agencies which affected this class must be carefully investigated and analysed in order to determine its potential relation to the political movement of the country as a whole.

The entire rural population of India can be divided into two great classes, namely, those engaged in the exploitation of the earth's surface, and those engaged in handicrafts, transport and trade. The census of 1911 puts the number of the first class at 224,000,000. Of these, only eight and a half million lived on agricultural rent, i.e. belonged to the landholding class who took no part in actual production. All the rest were cultivators of the soil. Thus we find two-thirds of the entire Indian population engaged in agricultural pursuits. Before proceeding to an analysis of the present economic condition of this great class, we will briefly consider the condition of that other section of the rural population, consisting of handicraftsmen, transport workers and traders.

When the British first came to India, a prosperous artisan class existed. Not being able to compete with the imported machine-made commodities, this artisan class was forced to abandon its occupation and go back to the land, but the destruction of Indian handicrafts was achieved more by violence than by peaceful competition, in order to secure a monopoly for the imported goods on the market. As a result of this violent destruction of the means of livelihood of a large section of the people, a greater part of the population was forced to live by agriculture than the land area justified. And so it is that ever since the British occupation more people lived by agriculture than could, under normal circumstances, be provided for. The result of this crowding out and destruction of handicrafts was first felt in the large towns and districts adjacent to big trading marts, leaving the handicraftsmen of the remote

village partially unaffected. Thus we find even as late as the last decades of the 19th century the modest necessities of the rural population manufactured or produced either by the cultivator himself or by the village artisan class out of their occupations. The population thus displaced has been partially absorbed, either among the land workers or the city proletariat. The extension of railways and river navigation has brought about very great changes in the local trades and primitive transport system of the rural area. In the earlier days, as in all the industrially backward countries, the Indian village used to be a self-contained economic unit. Its cloth and often the raw material for it, its food-stuff, its fuel and its scanty need of agricultural and industrial implements, together with the rest of the household necessities, used to be produced in the village itself. But in spite of the fact that large-scale machine industry remained almost unknown in India until hardly twenty years ago, the influence of imported machine-made commodities did not leave the Indian village untouched. It is long since cheap, machine-made commodities began to penetrate farther and farther into the country, ousting the artisan from his means of livelihood. Modern means of communication have brought the Indian villages closer to the cities, where the machine-made articles are imported from foreign countries. The village trader, to whom the peasant sells the surplus product of his land, brings within the reach of the peasant's slender purse comparatively larger quantities as well as varieties of domestic and ornamental articles made by machinery in some far-off land. The village trader who deals in these imported machine products, gives the peasant more of such articles as cloth, metal pots and utensils, cutleries, etc., than can the village artisan. Busy trade centres have sprung up along the railways and the river steamship routes, where the peasant can dispose of his product for ready money and can buy cheaply those necessities of life for which he formerly used to depend on the village



artisan. He sells his cotton, for example, to the exporters or the native mill-owners' agents and buys machine-made cloth cheaply from the local dealer.

Thus the village weaver is being gradually eliminated as an economic factor of the community. And when we take into consideration the fact that the craft of weaving became so widespread and well developed in India for centuries that it could survive the onslaught of machine production, the ultimate undermining of the weaver may be looked upon as the death of the rural artisan class. The same process of elimination is going on in all other craft industries; as the transportation by bullock cart has been greatly replaced by railways, the once prosperous industries of wheelwright and cartwright have been ruined. Such has also been the fate of boat-making industries, owing to the fact that an increasing bulk of the water traffic is carried in river steamers or steam launches owned by big river navigation companies. The village leather worker is disappearing under the competition of organized industries.

In short, the economic position of that portion of the rural population which has for centuries been engaged in non-agricultural pursuits has changed. The village artisan finds it more and more impossible to earn a living by his craft. This being the case, a great bulk of the artisan class is thrown out of occupation. And since the population which earned a living by handicrafts was to be counted by tens of millions in India and also on account of the fact that the large-scale machine industry of the country has been and still is too small to absorb an appreciable portion of these displaced artisans, the latter had to turn either towards the land, which was already overcrowded, or to stick to their bankrupt professions in order to eke out a miserable living. There is still to be found a large population in the rural districts engaged in handicrafts, but its economic condition is absolutely hopeless. If these unfortunate people are still sticking to the occupations

which cannot prevent death from starvation, it is not because they are too fond of these ancestral pursuits to abandon them, but because all other ways of earning their livelihood are blocked. According to the census report of 1911, no less than 25,000,000 of the rural population were engaged in handicrafts, a third of which number belonged to the weaving industry. The increasing influx of machine-made cotton cloth, not only foreign but Indian manufactured as well, has thrown a considerable part of these people out of their calling. The actual number thus displaced is hard to be ascertained, as the census figures of 1920-21 are not available. But in the words of the Industrial Commission (1916-18): "The extended use of cotton cloth of native and foreign manufacture by the poorer classes has very prejudicially affected the communities of weavers scattered over the country."

While the economic position of the rural artisan has become desperate, that of the trader on the contrary, is improving. The same agency, that is the imported manufactured articles, which has undermined the social foundation of the handicraft industry has at the same time been a cause of prosperity for the trading class. The most powerful man in the rural districts of India today is the trader, who is at the same time the usurer and in many cases happens to be the person who, by virtue of the liquid capital he is in possession of, speculates in the small holdings of the cultivator. The Indian peasant is entirely under the thumb of the country trader, who not only lends him money at an exorbitant rate of interest, but who controls practically the entire economic life of the countryside. He loans, sells and purchases seeds and grains, besides dealing in cloth, salt, oil, utensils, drugs and other household articles no longer produced in the village but imported from outside. The position of a village farmer with grains, oil-seeds or cotton to sell, but at the same time heavily indebted to the village trader,

his only customer, makes the former a helpless victim of the latter. Thus this rural trading class is looked upon by both the peasant and the ruined artisan as the cause of their misery. The peasant thinks so because the grip of the trader-usurer is becoming tighter on his throat every day, while the artisan is deprived of his living by the import of cheap machine-made commodities. The country dealer, possessing trader's and usurer's capital, sucks the blood of the peasantry on the one hand, and as representative of industrial capital on the other, has ruined the artisan class.

As in most parts of the country the production is on a small scale, it is practically impossible for the farmer to take his product to the larger markets where he can get a better price. But there is another factor which deprives the peasant of the right of selling his crops in the open market. It is again the trader engaged in usury. He loans the cultivator money either in cash or in seed grains in exchange for a mortgage on the prospective harvest. Naturally he imposes his own terms. Thus bound down, the farmer loses the right of even removing his crops from the field before the claims of the usurer as well as that of the big holder or the government (as the case may be) are satisfied. The disastrous effects of this system will be dealt with extensively in its proper place, but it is evident from what is said that the trading class is the master of the situation in the rural districts.

In 1911 the number of people living on trade was 17,800,000. Of this a considerable part belonged to the urban population, but no less than 70 per cent could be classed among the rural traders. It is through the agency of this comparatively small section of the people that the most outlying parts of the country were brought within the orbit of capitalist exploitation. The rural trading class of India, obstructed in its normal growth as the pioneer of the future native bourgeoisie, has proved itself a very

efficient instrument for extensive and intensive exploitation in the hands of foreign capital. It is through the medium of this class that the peasantry, in spite of being largely engaged in very backward methods of land culture, has been reduced to capitalist exploitation. In the person of the village trader, the agent of the big export firms is to be found in almost every corner of the country. These agents have elaborated a system of taking away by far the greater volume of the produce of the soil in exchange for cheap machine-made commodities, a considerable portion of which consists of domestic necessities and worthless ornaments, thus leaving the peasant starving and submerged in debt for the rest of his life. The crops on the fields are sold to the large capitalist concerns before they are harvested or often before they are sown.

On account of the influence of capitalist commerce exercised over agriculture, which still remains the basic industry of India, its social significance has undergone a radical change thanks to the mediation of the rural trader. The value of the agricultural production of the country is no longer determined alone by its capacity to feed the population, but also, and to an ever-increasing degree, by its usefulness to serve as raw materials for modern industries. Or in other words, the rural population of India, though apparently untouched by modern means of production, is no longer left to produce what it needs for its own maintenance; the land tilled by the Indian peasant has to produce what is needed for the machines somewhere else. The productive power of the land and of those who toil on it has been drawn into the orbit of the capitalist system. In short, the rural population of India has been to all intents and purposes reduced to capitalist exploitation, without having in appreciable degree its standard of living raised and mode of production revolutionized, as would have been the case under normal circumstances.

The cultivation of the soil in India, although to a great extent still backward, is being adapted more and more to

the exigencies of trade and industry than to the primal necessity of feeding the cultivator and his family. In form, agriculture still remains almost the same as a century ago, but its social character has been modernized. In this peculiar phenomenon lies the cause which is going to determine the economic and political movement among the rural population of India. Thus we find an increasing degree of local specialization of particular crops, especially in those grown for export or for supplying the necessities of the modern industrial centres of the country. For example, cotton is no longer grown in small patches, in almost every village, but it is concentrated in areas specially adapted for it. In the irrigated dry plains of the Punjab, United Provinces and Sindh, the growing of edibles like wheat, sugar cane, etc., is declining gradually, owing to the inability of the peasantry to meet the excessive rate of taxation and various kinds of rents imposed on these lands in return for the improvement made by artificial irrigation. In place of food crops, the cultivation of long-staple cotton has been introduced, because on account of its superior commercial value, cotton enables the peasant to meet his increased liabilities. On the irrigated low lands of Madras cotton, groundnuts and other oil-seeds which are in great demand in the export market, are replacing the staple food crops. In Central Provinces sugar cane is being ousted by cotton, which is readily exchanged for cash, with which the cultivator can buy the cheap imported sugar without taking the trouble of manufacturing it by his crude methods. The great fertile delta of the Ganges, which produces nearly one-fourth of the entire rice of the world, is rapidly coming under the cultivation of jute at the expense of the grain which is the staple of the province as well as of a great portion of the country. The reason is that the poor and indebted peasantry can realize cash immediately after the harvest from jute, and as a rule receive advances in money in order to meet the cost of sowing by mortgaging the coming harvest to the agents

of the exporter or manufacturer, who are to be found even in the remotest villages. Instances are not rare in which the cultivator is found to be so hopelessly at the mercy of the local dealer or exporter's agent, that he has to part with his rice crop from the very field and to go hungry all the year round, or to buy what is left after the choice grains have been exported, at a price often several times more than he has received for his crop. And this bad purchase he can make only by mortgaging his land-holding or by selling his cattle or plough.

Thus we find not only the peasant ground down to abject poverty, but the economic life of the Indian village in rapid process of transformation. Owing to the demand for raw materials in the industrial centres outside as well as inside the country, the kind of crops raised is undergoing a change and the method of marketing is altogether different from what it used to be before. The peasant can by no means be called the owner of the product of his soil and toil. His labour-power has been socialized in the sense that he is no longer allowed to enjoy the product of it, as well as that it is employed, not in order to satisfy the hunger of himself and his family, but for supplying the commercial and industrial needs of somebody else. The entire agricultural industry of India, in spite of its backward state, has also been socialized in so far as its scope is no longer limited to producing food for the toiler, and the value of its products is determined more by their exchangeability for other commodities than by their intrinsic character as articles of consumption.

Now we turn to examine the deplorable economic condition of the agricultural population of India as well as the causes which underlie it. Above has been given a general picture of the rural population, with special reference to the ruined state of the non-agricultural class, that is, the artisans and craftsmen. The new tendencies and the deep changes in the economic life of the rural population, agricultural as well as industrial, have also been

surveyed. But all the changes, cross-currents and upheavals in the rural population can be estimated according to their proper magnitude and character only by a thorough knowledge of the economic condition of that bulk of humanity engaged in agriculture, the basic industry of the country.

In 1911 the number of people living on the cultivation of the surface of earth and pasture was 224,000,000, that is more than 70 per cent of the entire population. Of these 8,500,000 lived on agricultural rent, taking no part in actual production; they belonged to the landholding class. Therefore the number of people engaged in agricultural production and living on it along with that of the allied industries was 215,500,000. This bulk of population can be divided into three sections according to their relative economic status. Owing to the absence of any reliable material, it is very hard to make this classification accurate, but in broad lines it is as follows:

1. Peasant proprietors, not in the sense of owning the land they cultivate, but that their holdings are large enough to leave to them a certain surplus to sell after having satisfied their needs.
2. Small farmers, living partly on the produce of land held on rent and partly on wages.
3. Land workers living exclusively on wages.

Besides these three main classes, a population of about 7,000,000 lives on cattle and other stock raising.

In 1920 the total population of India rose to 320,000,000 and the area under cultivation of both food and non-food crops amounted to 291,000,000 acres in the same year. Thus the average cultivated area per head of the population was a little above nine-tenth of an acre. But the actual distribution of the cultivated land was as follows: Deducting the 8,500,000 living on agricultural rent, and 7,000,000 dependent on stock-raising, fishing and hunting, the aggregate number of people subsisting exclusively on agriculture amounts to 208,000,000 of which

41,000,000 are land workers living exclusively on their wages without owning or holding any land. Thus we have in round numbers 167,000,000 people belonging to the first two classes of the agricultural population, namely peasant proprietors and small farmers. Large-scale farming is practically unknown in India. In spite of the fact that there is a rapid process of concentration in landholdings, the capitalists, rich intellectuals, traders and land-speculators, in whose hands the holdings are being concentrated, are not given to agriculture. Except in certain cases—for example, tea, indigo, coffee, partly ground-nuts and other oil-seeds—the tendency of the Indian bourgeoisie is to invest its capital not in agriculture, but in land. Of late this tendency has been showing signs of decline, and capitalistic production is being introduced into agriculture, especially in the cultivation of cotton, sugar, oil-seeds, and such other non-food crops which are in growing demand as raw materials in the new industries of the country. But on the whole, practically the entire cultivated area of the country is held on rent under various systems of land tenures, by the first two classes of the agricultural population. The number of these two classes is 167,000,000, including women, children and dependents. This number is divided among 28,000,000 families, averaging six members. About 5,000,000 of these families can be put in the first class (peasant proprietors), and the other 23,000,000 in the second (small farmers). The average holding of the first category amounts to about 20 acres and that of the second to about 8 acres per family. Information available about the average holding per family of cultivators and the difference between the holdings of the two classes is very scanty and unreliable. The size of the holding varies from one province to the other. The tenant's holding per family goes as low as 2.8 acres in the Punjab while that of the big farmers goes as high as 59 acres in Bengal.



Of the 42,000,000 people living on agricultural wages 25,800,000 are actual workers, men and women included, the former being 13,100,000 and the latter 12,700,000. The rest are evidently children and infirm dependents. A considerable portion of the land workers are employed by the peasant proprietors and big landowners cultivating a part of their field directly, that is, not renting it out to the tenants. A small number of the field workers is also employed by the petty farmers in the sowing and harvest seasons. These land-workers can be called agricultural proletariat, in every sense of the word. Their economic position is much worse than that of the pauperized peasantry, being that of wage-earners pure and simple. The classified figures of the 1920 census are not yet available, but according to the semi-official reports and other sources of information, the number of field workers living exclusively on wages has increased by 60 per cent in the last ten years, causing a decrease of about 40 per cent in the petty peasantry and small landholders. This increase in the number of land-workers is due on the one hand to the tremendous rise in the cost of living, forcing women and young people into manual labour, and on the other, to the rapid process of land concentration caused by the growing indebtedness of the petty peasantry.

This huge mass of agricultural workers is a dead-weight on the rural population of India. It came into existence not by the process of the economic evolution of society as in the European countries; it was created by the destruction of the native craft industries, which till the earlier decades of the 19th century employed 25 per cent of the entire population of the country. Craft industries, which supplied the means of livelihood to such a considerable portion of the people, was ruined as stated before, not by the growth in the country of a higher form of production namely machine industry, but partly by violent methods and partly by the introduction of machine products imported from a foreign country. Thus by the thirties of the last century,

nearly half a million families of artisans were thrown out of work completely. As the normal industrial development of the country was obstructed artificially in order to preserve the monopoly of a foreign capitalist class on the Indian market, this huge mass of rural population dislodged from its occupation by machine production, could not be turned into a city proletariat in the same manner as in European lands. A great part of it was driven back to the land which had already been supporting too many people, and consequently crowded others out. Thus came into existence the large rural population living on agricultural wages. The number of these field workers has constantly been augmented from the small farmers overwhelmed by indebtedness on one side and on the other, from the village artisans ruined by the steady penetration of cheap, imported machine-made articles into the farthest interior of the country.

The condition of these field-workers is very bad. At least six months in the year they are without work or are employed very irregularly. Since nearly two-third of the entire cropped area of the country is cultivated by small farmers holding on an average 8 acres per family of six (at the minimum) and since the distribution of the greater part of the remaining one-third (about 100,000,000 acres out of 106,000,000) is also so subdivided as to preclude the employment of any considerable number of hired labourers, the possibility of this large mass of field workers being absorbed into the agricultural industry is very limited. The peasant proprietors (that is, the farmers holding on an average 20 acres per family) cannot employ a very large portion of the agricultural workers, and these only in the season of seeding and harvesting. The area covered by large-scale farms is hardly 6,000,000 acres, and this is the only place where a steady employment is provided for the field-workers; but no more than a couple of millions can be provided for there, under the best circumstances.

This being the case, the field workers of India constitute what is called the floating population. Not having a place where they can be steadily employed, these toilers wander over the country in large masses in search of employment. According to the climatic conditions and those of the soil, different crops are sown and harvested in different parts of the country in different parts of the year. Crops like rice, which need speedy seeding, transplanting as well as harvesting in short spaces of time, supply work to a great bulk of these land-workers; but the total duration of this employment does not last more than two months a year. The average wages of the field-worker is hardly 8 pence during the working period; thus if the whole year, including the unemployed months, are taken into consideration, the amount dwindles down to 3 or 4 pence a day. The agricultural wages have gone up during the last two years by 20 per cent while the rise in the cost of living has been over 400 per cent.

Along with the change in its industrial policy, the Government of India has recently been adopting measures to improve the agriculture as well. The object is the same, namely to increase the agricultural productivity of the country. The only way of achieving this end is the introduction of modern methods of cultivation by using machinery. But the smallness of the average holding of the farmer is a great obstacle to the use of machinery. A free transfer of the agricultural industry from the present system of small-scale individual production to large-scale capitalistic production entails the necessity of driving an increasing percentage of the rural population to wage-slavery, because large farms can only come into existence by depriving the small peasants of the petty holdings to which they cling, although starving perpetually. Thus the scheme of increasing the productivity of the land by introducing improved methods would swell the wealth produced by the agricultural industry, but the economic condition of the population living

on small holdings or field labour would grow worse in proportion, since the introduction of improved methods will drive the small farmers off the land and increase the number of rural wage-earners. But the growing use of labour-saving machineries in agriculture will deprive the field-workers of employment, thus accentuating their present precarious plight. This problem seems to be taken into consideration by the government in its new economic policy, even if the political movement of the bourgeois intellectuals still remains oblivious to such vital question of social economics. The British rulers appear to appreciate the grave danger of the existence of an ever-growing mass of unemployed and unemployables in the country. In recommending that the Government should encourage and help the introduction of machinery in agriculture, the Industrial Commission (1916-18) remarks: "It is clear that, if the basis of employment also be widened, crop failures will lose much of the severity of their effects, and the extension of industries, in as great a variety as circumstances will permit, will do more than anything to secure the economic stability of the labouring-classes."

Of course this view of "securing the economic stability of the labouring-classes" is taken from the exploiters' angle of vision and adapted to their interests. While the occasional crop failures have their effects on the economic condition of the people, it is only the theory of capitalist imperialism which ascribes to crop failures the entire responsibility for the havocs wrought by the famines in India. The same Industrial Commission admits in another part of its report: "Famine now connotes not so much a scarcity or entire absence of food, as high prices and a lack of employment in the affected areas." It also testifies to the fact that "the development of irrigation and the improvement of agriculture enable the country to grow a much larger quantity of food-stuffs than before."

The secret of the misery of the rural population lies

in the fact that the agricultural production of India has been brought completely within the sphere of capitalist exploitation, foreign and native combined. The unrestricted export of foodgrains, together with the merciless speculation carried on by the native traders, raises the price continually on the one hand, while on the other, the lack of employment among an evergrowing section of the rural population creates great scarcity of money. So, even when there is food the people die of hunger because they have no money to buy it with.

In the province of Madras, the use of machinery in agriculture has been more than in any other part. As a result the productivity has been increased, especially of the land under oil-seeds; but the other side of the picture shows a great decrease in the number of unemployed field-workers.

Finding it impossible to absorb this mass of unemployables within the country, a large number of these had to be sent out to earn a living somewhere else. The rubber plantations of the Malay States provided a field. The emigrant workers have been helpless victims of the same class of native traders who found it profitable to speculate in human labour. In the last years, the slump in the rubber market has thrown hundreds of thousands of these plantation workers out of their employment.

So it is evident that the problem of finding employment for the growing mass of field-workers can be solved neither by the capitalist method of increasing production by the use of labour-saving machineries; nor by the bourgeois nationalist programme of conferring on the big landholding capitalist class the right of ownership, thus exempting it from the liability of paying augmented taxes to the Government; not by the petty-bourgeois liberal reformism which prescribes the abolition of large holdings and leaves the basic industry of the country in the hand of the small farmers. We will be better able to formulate our solution after having analysed the system of land tenures as well as the economic

condition of the first two sections of the rural population, namely peasant proprietors and small farmers.

In India the ownership of the soil, both cultivated and uncultivated, is vested in the State. The land tenure is divided into two classes, namely Zamindari system and Ryotwari system. The former again is divided into two categories, permanent and temporary. The system of land settlement that prevails in India is based on the imported idea of English feudal aristocracy mixed with the native tradition of peasants owning the land and paying the State tribute through the medium of a class of tax-collectors. Of course, none of these old basic ideas can be found *in toto* in the present system of land tenure; but the latter is the development of the two old systems adapted to the modern necessities of capitalist exploitation.

Under the first system of tenure, that is the Zamindari system, the land revenue is assessed by the State permanently or temporarily as the case may be, on individual families holding large estates and occupying a position analogous to that of a landlord. These holders in their turn lease out small parcels of their estates to tenants who cultivate the land. When the revenue is assessed directly by the State on small holdings occupied and cultivated by the peasant, the tenure is called Ryotwari. The second class of tenure is always temporary.

In order to understand clearly the agrarian problem of India and the economic condition of the population engaged exclusively and living on cultivation of the earth, it is necessary to go into the history of the development of tenure, distribution and taxation of land. When in the middle of the 18th century the British East India Company assumed the political control over the province of Bengal, the ryot or cultivator had been in the habit of paying a fixed share of produce, either in kind or cash, to the large landholders called the Zamindars. Under the Mughal Empire, these Zamindars paid to the central government nine-tenth of what they received from the cultivator, retaining one-tenth for themselves. Besides, they had the right to assess additional local cesses which entirely fell

to their share. At the time of the Emperor Akbar was introduced the custom of renewing assessment of the holding of the landlords every ten years. Nominally, the landlords held their estates under mandates from the Emperor in return for meritorious services rendered. The right of collecting revenue passed on to the heir after the death of the Zamindar, on the former's paying the Emperor a gift or fine. With the decline of the Mughal power the well-regulated feudal land laws introduced by Akbar ceased to function, and chaos and anarchy in land taxation as well as administration was the order of the day when the British became the supreme political rulers of the country. In its first attempt at revenue administration, the Company adopted the prevailing custom of annual assessment; according to this system, the right of collecting rent was sold annually to the highest bidder, that is, to the person who could guarantee the government the greatest amount of revenue from the land. The result of this method of collecting the largest amount of revenue was disastrous. The Company's government was satisfied with receiving from the landholders the guaranteed amount, without minding the methods employed in collecting it as well as the share that the collector chose to take for his own. Between the government and the people there came into existence a class of tax-farmers, who by their very economic position were not at all interested in the actual agriculture, but only in getting as much as possible from the cultivator. Knowing that the holding might pass away from his hand the next year, the tax-farmer's philosophy was to make hay while the sun was shining. Consequently, the peasantry was ruined, agriculture was largely abandoned, and the amount extracted from the cultivator even by the most merciless procedure diminished. It was not long before the Company came to understand the wrong economics of the system.

The British East India Company, in its character as the representative of trading capital, naturally desired to exterminate the Indian feudal land tenure, in order to bring the producing forces within territories occupied by it under its

own direct exploitation. The procedure of leasing out gradually the right of collecting land revenue ruined the hereditary landowner families. In a short space of time, the former hereditary right of collecting land revenue passed away from the ancient feudal families into the hands of a new class of lease-holders and tax-farmers, who were at the same time officials, traders and usurers. But this fundamental change in social economics alarmed the British Parliament, which in those days (1777-80) still greatly reflected the political views of the English landed aristocracy. True to its feudal traditions, which were not dead as yet, the British Parliament could not watch idly the peaceful passing off of its peers in India. Accordingly, it was enacted in 1784 that "whereas diverse Rajas, Zamindars, Polygars, Talookdars and other native landholders within the British territories in India, have been unjustly deprived of, or compelled to abandon or relinquish, their respective Indian Jurisdictions, Rights and Privileges, the Court of Directors should take measures for establishing, upon principles of moderation and justice, the Permanent Rules by which their respective Tributes, Rents, and Services shall be in future rendered and paid to said United Company by the said Rajas, Zamindars, etc." Thus we find the struggle of the two philosophies of the social economics of the England of those times, namely the reactionary tendency of the landed aristocracy to cling to undermined feudalism, and the bourgeois mission of freeing the peasantry for unfettered exploitation by capital, reflected in the administration of India in the earlier days of British domination. The disastrous effects on revenue as a result of the system of annual assessment, together with the opposition raised by the British Parliament against the destruction of the Indian feudal families, thrust upon the Company's government the necessity of reforming its land policy. The political power wielded by the British rulers in those days was not sufficient to enable them to assume the task of bringing the entire population under the exploitation of trades capital, without some native intermediary. Nor were the



English invaders numerically strong enough to undertake the task of collecting the land tax directly from the cultivators. Therefore, it was resolved to create out of the new revenue collecting class a class of landholders. Being originally a class of usurers, traders and land-speculators, this new landholding element could be counted upon as the social basis of the foreign rule.

The reformed land tenure was introduced as an experiment in 1789 in the form of a Ten Years' Settlement. It was a reversal to the old system of Akbar. This policy of reviving the dead landlordism, although in a modernized form, was inaugurated under the auspices of Cornwallis—that champion of the British landed aristocracy, who had but a few years before met his defeat at the hands of the rebellious colonial bourgeoisie at Yorktown. The experiment was found to be satisfactory to all concerned; the income of the government was stabilized, a loyal supporter was found in the contented class of newly-created landholders, and agricultural production was increased, the peasantry having been saved somewhat from the ravenous exploitation of the irresponsible tax-farmers. On the expiration of the experimental period, Cornwallis reported that the new system had worked very satisfactorily and recommended that the next assessment should be made in perpetuity. Consequently the entire cultivated area of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was assessed permanently, the Government's share in the revenue being fixed at 90% of the whole economic rent. This is known as the Permanent Settlement of 1793. The effect of this settlement was that a permanent landholding class living on agricultural rent was created out of the tax-farmers, or in other words, those who had been collectors of revenue became practically the owners of their leaseholds, while the cultivators, who had been the owners of the soil they tilled, became tenants at the mercy of the Zamindars, who soon began to burden them with rack-rent.

The Permanent Settlement of 1793, which is looked upon even by the Indian Nationalist as one bright spot in the history of British rule, and for the general extension of which all over the country the political leaders have been stoutly fighting during more than half a century, has been the most sinister event in the annals of modern India. It checked the growth of the Indian bourgeoisie in its infancy and diverted it into a wrong way. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, there came into existence in India a prosperous trading class with a considerable capital accumulated in its hands. This trading class was largely responsible for undermining the foundation of feudalism in the days of decay of the Mughal Empire. All the big landowners as well as the rulers of the various independent states that sprang up on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, were heavily indebted to this class of usurious traders. The land was rapidly passing out of the hands of the hereditary feudal owners into the control of usury and trades capital. The latter was interested in seeing more people engaged in industries than in agriculture. In the middle of the eighteenth century in the province of Bengal alone, there were several million people employed in one industry—that of cotton-spinning and weaving. There were textile factories employing more than 100 workers. Woven cotton cloth formed a considerable part of the commodities exported from India by the East India Company, even towards the end of the eighteenth century. So this class of traders was the advance guard of the coming Indian bourgeoisie and would have developed into the modern capitalist class had not its normal growth been obstructed. The representatives of the British bourgeoisie recognized in the Indian traders and land-speculators their rival, historically destined to compete for the right of monopoly of exploiting the country. In the pious request of the English landed aristocracy assembled in Parliament not to wipe off landlordism in India, was found a way to sidetrack the energies of Indian capital. Feudalism as a hereditary element in social

economics had already been irretrievably undermined; the land had been freed from feudal fetters. By the Permanent Settlement, the land liberated from feudal ownership was given over to the trading class still in its infancy. Thus the capital and energy of the trading class, which under normal circumstances would have proved to be the forefather of the Indian bourgeoisie, was diverted to the investment on land which offered a promising prospect. In the struggle between two trading classes the less developed one succumbed before the more developed. The Indian traders and usurers were not only prevented from constituting themselves eventually into rivals of the British capital, but were converted into a loyal support of British rule. But the hand of history cannot be kept back for ever. As has been shown in the first part, this very landholding class, created by the British Government for its own benefit, has contributed largely to the rise of the modern intellectuals, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie of India. The social forces assert themselves unfailingly.

Of course, by the Permanent Settlement the absolute ownership of the land was not forfeited by the government. The land was leased out to a number of middlemen at a rate of assessment fixed in perpetuity, who were given the right to collect the revenue on behalf of the State. Thus under the Zamindari system which is in many respects analogous to landlordism, the land rent in India is not, as in other countries, a tribute paid to the State out of the income of the land-owner, but on the contrary it represents the relinquishment of a portion of the land revenue in favour of the landholders. Or in other words, under the Permanent Settlement the British Government, instead of exacting tribute from the landlords, concedes to them a part of the net rental of land, besides the privileges of sucking the blood of the poor tenants by a thousand and one ways, which will be dealt with presently. The British rulers adopted this method of subsidizing a parasitic class for its own purposes as demonstrated above. But the reactionary character of that wing of the Indian political movement, which demands the extension of this system of

tenure over the entire country, is betrayed when we find that under it, it is the small class of landholders that thrives at the cost of the cultivators. Even to the government this system has ceased to be useful, since it has played out its role to divert India's trades capital from industry to land; whereas, on the other hand, in the provinces where this system is in force, the government is deprived by this privileged class of a great part of the land rent. For example, in the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, where the Permanent Settlement was first introduced, the total revenue paid to the government by all the Zamindars taken together is £3,500,000, the sum fixed as 90 per cent of the entire economic rent a century and quarter ago, while the actual rental has gone up to more than £14,000,000.

The Permanent Zamindari system holds good in five-sixth of the provinces of Bengal and Bihar, one-tenth of the United Provinces and a quarter of the province of Madras, representing in all about one-fifth of the area of British India. Another 32 per cent of the area of British India is under temporary Zamindari system which allows a new assessment every 20 to 30 years. In the rest of the area, that is 48 per cent, the Ryotwari system is in force. In the native states the temporary Zamindari system prevails, although a considerable portion of land is under Ryotwari tenure. Accurate figures about the land tenure in the Native States are not available. Though for reasons stated above, in the earlier days of their domination, the British rulers were forced to bring into existence a new class of landholders, after the old feudal landlordism had been destroyed by the development of new social forces, in course of time those reasons gradually lost their potentiality. The procedure of collecting land rent through the medium of a privileged class soon proved to be uneconomical. The Permanent Settlement precluded the government from participating in the actual profits of land rent, which kept on increasing owing to the more settled condition of the country. To its discomfiture, the foreign capitalist government found that it had signed away its right of exploiting the agricultural

population, in so far as the proceeds from the land rent were concerned, to the new landholding class, which was growing wealthy under the protection of the government. But the British rulers did not think it was yet possible to maintain their power over the vast population and extent of the country without the help of a solid and contented native element. So they did not dare to do away with the Zamindars; but they decided not to concede so much privilege to them in the newly acquired territories. Thus we find the Permanent Settlement in force in those provinces which fell into the hands of the English first, namely Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and the United Provinces. Even in those provinces, the Permanent Settlement was not introduced into those portions which came under the British domination subsequently. The new system was temporary Zamindari tenure. Under this system, the class of intermediary landholders was still retained in order to collect the rent for the government, but the latter reserved the right of enhancing its share in the total economic rent of the land from time to time. The government still needed such a class of landholders in order to avoid the troubles and worry of collecting the revenue. This system prevails in those parts of the country which came under British administration while the British power was not yet well consolidated; that is, in some part of Bengal and Bihar-Orissa, nine-tenth of the United Provinces, the whole area of the Punjab, four-fifth of the Central Provinces, the entire North-Western Frontier Province and small tracts of Bombay. As stated above, 32 per cent of British India and by far the greater part of the native States come under temporary Zamindari system. In British India alone, 195,000,000 acres are held by Zamindars temporary, while 122,000,000 acres are held by Zamindars permanent.

Under the temporary Zamindari system, the right of collecting rent in return for a share in it, is conferred, in addition to individuals, upon joint villages. The revenue system which treats the village as a unit, and makes a collective assessment is only applied to the joint villages of the north, that

is, in those parts of the country where the old village communities existed at the time of British occupation. For the convenience of collecting revenue, the British Government thought it wise to utilize these communities as economic or proprietary units; the services of the Patwari (the village headman) were found particularly valuable. Theoretically these so-called 'joint villages' are held jointly and severally liable for the revenue charge, local rates etc. the burden of which they distribute among the co-shares according to the rule and principle of their constitution. But in practice, the Patwari is the supreme power being the representative of the Government and abusing his power to such an extent that instances are not rare when he is killed by the villagers.

Now we will proceed to analyse the effects of the Zamindari system, both permanent as well as temporary, on the cultivators. It is held by a great majority of the Nationalists that the Zamindari system, and especially the Permanent Settlement of the Bengal type, is most beneficial to the cultivator, because it protects him from the exploitation of the Government. But the facts disprove this opinion, which manifestly is based upon class interest. Under the Zamindari tenure, the tenants suffer more than anybody else. He has absolutely no protection against being rack-rented.

The excesses committed by the Bengal landholders became so flagrant that the Government found it imperative to curtail their power by granting Occupancy Right to the cultivator. By the Bengal Land Act of 1859, the government recognized the right of the tenant holding land since 1793 or for twenty years, to remain in possession of the holding without the Zamindar's having the authority to eject him or to enhance his rental without a civil suit. But these guarantees count for very little in the practical life of the cultivator. By the privilege of appropriating a large portion of the entire economic rent, the Zamindars have accumulated considerable wealth; thus they can afford to buy off all the petty judicial, revenue and executive officials on whom rests the

task of enforcing the law. And on the other side, the object of the government in enacting such laws was not to safeguard the interests of the toiling class-against the landed rich, but to weaken the position of the landholders by posing as the protector of the poor cultivator against the oppression of the latter. Thus, while in recent years there has always existed growing acrimony between the government and the landholding class over their respective share in the proceeds of exploitation, the position of the peasantry has been getting worse and worse, because both are desirous to extract as much as possible from the cultivator. The fact that the public exchequer receives less revenue from the area under Zamindari system than from the Ryotwari area, that is, the area under direct government assessment, does not by any means substantiate the contention that the cultivator under the former is any better off economically than under the latter. Under the Zamindari tenure, the actual payment, including that made in kind, is much more than the legal rate of rent payable to the landholder. The cultivator pays a fixed rent, assessed at an average of 35 per cent of his net income, plus contributions for the upkeep of the Zamindari household and rent collecting staff, the latter being a permanent demand and is considered a part of the tenant's liabilities. The salary of the Zamindar's collectors is £ 1 per month on the average. This terribly insufficient wage naturally makes the Zamindar's officials extremely corrupt ; they exact all kinds of contributions from the tenants under one pretext or another. Most of the rich holders are absentees, living most of the year in the cities, where their luxurious life is supported by the rent exacted from the peasantry. Thus the cultivator is left entirely at the mercy of the unscrupulous rent collectors, who at the same time indulge in petty usury. Over and above all these liabilities, which are more or less constant, the peasant has to pay contributions, mostly in kind, for the various religious and other festivals celebrated in the household of the Zamindar. All these taken together constitute no less than

75 per cent of the net income of his land and labour, which the cultivator has to part with for the benefit of the idle Zamindar. Should the poor peasant refuse to meet all these legal liabilities, the landlord, who is usually also the usurer and is on friendly terms with the local native officials, finds means of getting him into various complications, which result in his ejection from the holding and ultimate ruin.

The entire cultivated area (56,803,000 acres) of the province of the Punjab is under temporary Zamindari system, the term of every assessment being fixed at twenty years. This province, being one of those parts of the country where modern irrigation has greatly increased the productivity of the soil, is considered as heaven for the cultivator. But when one turns to the actual condition of the people, quite another picture is found. The entire benefit accrued from the improvement of land and the consequent rise in its value goes to the government and to the native tax farmers. In 1894 it was found by an enquiry that more than 20 per cent of the total cultivated area had been either sold or was heavily encumbered with debt ; between 1892 and 1896 more than 50,000 acres had passed from the hand of the small farmers to that of the money lenders and other non-agricultural holders. In the year 1899-1900, 120,000 acres were sold, and the area under mortgage was 300,000 acres. In 15 years (1902-1917) the net increase in the mortgage of the province exceeded £10,000,000. Of this nearly 90 per cent falls on the peasant farmers. The real cause of this ruined economic condition of the peasantry is to be looked for neither in the government's contention that the cultivator is improvident, nor in the nationalist theory of the excessive rate of land revenue exacted by the state. It lies in the fact that the comparatively backward agricultural production of India has been reduced to the modern form of capitalist exploitation. It is not the rent with which the present government of India is principally concerned, as was the case with its predecessors ; today the source of government income from the land lies in the commercial value of its produce. Thus the peasant's relation with the state or the landlord is not liquidated, as before, by paying a certain portion of the



crops ; the entire quantity of the product of his land and labour is under the control of capitalist commerce. That land revenue does not constitute the principal factor in the field of economic exploitation of the present Indian state is proved by the following figures which show a gradual diminution in the percentage of it :

	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920
Proportion borne by the land revenue to gross income of the state	39%	29.5%	23%	19%	—
Taxation proper	43%	41.8%	40.8%	38.6%	35%

In order to disprove the nationalist contention that the peasantry is becoming impoverished on account of the heavy burden of taxation imposed on the land by the government, the latter points out the fact that in all the provinces where the assessment is subject to periodical revision, it has been the policy of the government to reduce gradually the proportion borne by the assessment to the net assets. For example in the province of Agra the standard of assessment was reduced from 90 per cent in 1812 to 50 per cent in 1885, the percentage having been lowered considerably since then; in the province of Orissa the reduction was from 83.3 per cent in 1882 to 54 per cent in 1900 and the present rate is below 50 per cent. But this decrease does not actually affect the total revenue ; on the contrary, the amount of income to the public exchequer from land revenue has increased.

The development of the land revenue of British India since the revolution of 1857 is shown by the following figures :

1856-57	..	..	173,000,000
1870-71	..	..	199,000,000.
1880-81	..	..	219,000,000
1890-91	..	..	240,000,000
1900-01	..	..	262,000,000
1910-11	..	..	317,000,000
1920-21	..	..	351,000,000

Territorial expansion of any fiscal importance during this period was the acquisition of Upper Burmah in 1886. Thus the extension of cultivation, resulting in larger production and rise of prices may be held responsible for this substantial increase in the total land revenue. Today, in actual land rent, the Indian peasant pays less in proportion to the gross produce of his land than before, but the amount he pays is more than he used to pay formerly. Because the part left to him has ceased to be his property in the sense it used to be. The commercial value of the entire agricultural production is of much more importance to the present capitalist government than the rent on the land. This is equally in case with the landholders, the majority of whom look upon land not in the same spirit as their feudal predecessors used to, but rather as a profitable means of investing their capital. The difference between the economic outlook of the government and that of the landholding class in this; while the former being the political apparatus of a foreign bourgeoisie, completely conscious of its interest, is desirous of increasing the productivity of the land, the latter, having its capital invested in the land, tries to recover the greatest amount possible in rent and interest. Thus it is but natural, looked at from the point of view that the two exploiting factors represent two categories of capital, one more advanced and more conscious than the other—that the common victim, that is, the cultivator, should be exploited in different ways. That is why we find the peasants in those parts of the country directly assessed by the government superficially more prosperous than their fellows living under Zamindari tenures.

The government's policy is to let the peasant toil on his land with the least encumbrance possible in order that at the end of each year there may be an increase in the total production, since the greater the productivity of the land and labour of the country, the more profit accrues to the capitalist class, whose representative is the government. But agriculture in India being still very backward, there is a limit to the increase in its production. Therefore the

insufficient agricultural production of the country has been brought under intensive capitalistic exploitation, thus throwing the peasantry into a state of hopeless and perpetual poverty. The grip of the money-lender is becoming tighter and tighter every day. In order to bring the product of the cultivator's labour freely into the open market of capitalist commerce, the government would like to do away with the intermediary of the native trader and money-lender; but it cannot be done,— the latter have become an integral part of the structure of the exploiting apparatus.

Twenty years ago the province of the Punjab found itself in an agrarian crisis. The money-lender was the master of the situation, being in alliance with the Zamindar. The cultivator was losing his hold upon the land. The cultivated area redeemed was always less than the area newly mortgaged. At last in 1901 the government found it necessary to turn its back on the tax-farming barons and take up the cause of the peasantry. The Zamindars were a convenient class to have in order to save the government the troubles and worries of collecting the rent, and to be relied upon in case of emergency; but as soon as they constituted a fetter on production, bourgeois economic theories of the freedom of the peasantry and the security of its tenancy were turned against the once useful class. Thus was passed, to the great discomfiture of the Zamindars and in the face of strong opposition from the camp of the nationalists, the Land Alienation Act. By this legislation, the cultivator was given the right of occupancy on the land, that is, the landholder could no longer enhance the rate of rent arbitrarily. Formerly it had been well nigh impossible for the cultivator to hold on to the same piece of land for any length of time. Unless the peasant was secure on his holding, he could not be expected to work hard on it and increase its productivity. The cultivator was freed from the vagaries of the Zamindar in order to be more intensively exploited by the capitalist government and the native trading class. Under the old system of tenure, the Punjab peasantry was inextricably in the grip of

the usurer, who used to lend him money to pay the exactions of the Zamindar. The land was rapidly being transferred from the hand of the agricultural class. It was ceasing to be a source of production and becoming a medium of speculation. The result of this process was a fall in production, therefore the government, controlled by a foreign bourgeoisie, found it imperative to 'protect' the cultivator. But so long as the accumulated wealth of a certain class of the native population finds its way to higher forms of investment blocked, it must follow speculative and usurious pursuits. If it is prevented from speculating on land rent, it speculates on agricultural product; and the government being interested in complete commercialisation of the product of the land, needs the services of the native trading class. Thus we find the peasant still in the grip of the usurer, even after he has been secured on his land, somewhat immune from the exactions of the Zamindar.

The secret of the incurable misery of the Indian peasantry lies in the fact that it is being ground between two mill-stones, viz. foreign capital in a higher stage of development and the native capital in a lower stage. In the field of exploitation the two depend upon each other, while at the same time, owing to the very historic inevitability of the evolution of capitalism, they cannot help clashing with each other. When they depend on each other, the native traders bring the farmer directly under the commercial exploitation of the foreign bourgeoisie ; when they conflict with each other, it is again the peasantry which perishes in the clash.

As stated before, the average holding of the Indian cultivator is so small that it is very hard for him to subsist on its produce. When, under the Zamindari system, a greater part of the produce is taken away from him in the form of rent, interest and contribution, he has to starve because what is left to him is too insufficient. On the other hand when, under the benign protection of the capitalist government, the relative amount of the various kinds of direct taxation to be borne by him is reduced, the portion of his produce spared

him may be somewhat more, but the prices of other necessities have already gone up and he finds himself in the clutches of the trader. Such being the case, a great majority of the rural population live on the verge of starvation all their life. Not being able to sustain himself and his family on the produce of his small holding, the petty peasant sinks into indebtedness, which goes on increasing till he is thrown off his land no matter what sort of tenure he theoretically enjoys. The existence of a considerable amount of capital invested in land is forcing its rapid concentration in the hands of the non-agricultural class. The registration of Land Records shows a growth in the cases of land transfers. In the year 1918-19 no less than 994,000 holdings changed hands, involving 4,676,000 acres. The figures available about the cases of land transfer are very incomplete. The Statistical Reports of the government on this subject do not embrace three entire provinces, viz. Bengal, Madras and Bihar and Orissa ; no informations are available about the number of transfers executed through the Civil Courts : and it is stated in the official statistics that the figures contained in the official reports are also incomplete. Thus we can put the number of transfers at three or four times above that indicated. Or in other words, an average of about 20,000,000 acres of cultivated land is passing on to the control of non-agriculturists annually. Therefore to that extent, agriculture in India is ceasing to be determined by the village economy of the petty peasantry.

This transfer of land from the cultivators to the land speculator is gravely affecting the production of the country. We call this class, in whose hand the land is being concentrated, 'speculators', because they invest their capital not in agriculture, but in land. The method of cultivating the land thus concentrated is not modernised; capitalist large scale production is not being introduced in the place of small scale individual production. Thus we find an increase of 50 per cent in the land lying fallow in British India in 1917-18 and the proportion increased to 62 per cent in

the year following. The cause of the pauperisation of the small farmers, who are abandoning their land because they find it impossible to eke out a living on it. The government is naturally alarmed at the fall of production resulting from this diminution in the area cultivated. Therefore it is adopting a 'forward policy' in agriculture as well as in industry. It does not find any other solution of this grave problem than to hand over the agricultural industry to the capitalists, who have so far been *speculating* in land and the limited product of primitive agriculture. To encourage the introduction of modern machinery in agriculture is the new policy of the government. Considering the fact that machinery cannot be used economically while agriculture continues on the prevailing small-holding system, the corollary of this new policy inevitably must be the wholesale expropriation of the small farmers. The consequence of this will be the enrichment of the landholding and money-lending class which has a surplus capital to avail itself of this new policy, and a tremendous increase in the mass of rural population living on agricultural wages. And since there already exists a great scarcity of employment for the field workers, the misery of the land proletariat can be easily imagined when their number will be greatly augmented by the introduction of labour saving machineries in agriculture on one hand, and by depriving small farmers of their land holding on the other—the two inevitable results of large scale farming.

Though the cultivator living under the Zamindari system is so much exploited by the idle class of modern land-barons in some provinces and by capitalist tax-farmers in others, the economic condition of the Ryotwari tenants cannot be called in any way better. Under the Zamindari system, specially the permanent type of Bengal, the rate of rent legally paid by the cultivator is often less than that borne by the fellow living on Ryotwari tenures. But this advantage is more than out-balanced by innumerable other contributions having their origin in the tradition of feudalism, long

dead and gone as an economic force. The Zamindari tenants are protected by the government with land laws which render the former secure against the excessive exploitation of the landholder. Of course the real object of this protection is to cut into the enviable large income of the rich landholding class, whose continued existence is becoming more and more undesirable, and even prejudicial to free capitalist exploitation of agriculture. Nevertheless while the Zamindari tenants are protected, the cultivators living in Ryotwari land are exploited directly by the government. And, since the capitalist background and consciousness of the British Indian government is much more scientific and developed than that of the native land speculators, landed bourgeoisie and usurers, the exploitation exercised by the former is naturally more efficient and cuts in deeper. The Ryotwari system prevails over 48 per cent of the entire area of British India and a greater portion of the 32 per cent under temporary Zamindari system, to all practical purpose, falls under the former. The land under these two kinds of tenure can be said to have been nationalised if the ownership by a state in the hands of a foreign power, can be called nationalisation. This system of government dealing directly with the cultivator is claimed to have been adopted according to the tradition of the country. It is true that in India, historically, land revenue is an economic factor prior to private rent on land. In the pre-British period, the monarchs, both Hindu and Mussalman, used to take directly a share of the produce of the land; this claim was not based on the right to participate in the contributions gathered by the landowning nobility, but directly on the produce of the soil. Thus the revenue idea evolved before that of rent, which all through the pre-British period was theoretically non-existent. The rent enjoyed by the feudal holders was identical with that portion of revenue relinquished by the Crown in favour of its nobles. The real rent and rent-yielding property in land was introduced into Indian economics by the British. It has been indicated already how the English

idea of landed aristocracy was reflected in the Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

The British government in India being a political apparatus of the bourgeoisie, could not forever stick to the policy of creating a rent-getting landed aristocracy for India. For various reasons pointed out before, especially in those earlier days of the Indian Empire when the British rulers were still closely connected with and were under the political control of the English landowning class, the creation of a class intermediary between the State owing the land and the peasant cultivating the soil, was found necessary. But the economic policy of the Indian government changed in proportion as the social character of the English bourgeoisie went on changing.

Thus came the time when the Indian government decided to keep to itself (that is to the British bourgeoisie), both the revenue as well as rent from land. The intermediary land-holding class appropriating the land-rent was no longer necessary. In order to justify this combined state-landlordism and state-capitalism (in agriculture), the British official revenue experts resort to the history of ancient and medieval India to establish that "the right of the state to the rent is superior to that of the private holder".

For all practical economic purposes, the area under Ryotwari tenure and a considerable portion of that temporary Zamindari tenure granted to small holders cultivating the land by themselves with the aid of hired labour, could be called a huge farm. The government, in its character of landowner receives the rent and in that of capitalist proprietor, is interested in the increase of production, which as social production, belongs to it. Thus the peasants are nominally independent small farmers, but in fact labourers on a huge capitalist farm. The productivity of those tracts directly under government control, has been greatly increased by the introduction of artificial irrigation. But this advantage has been more than out-balanced by new taxations. The average rate of rent on the land actually under



cultivation is 2.8 rupees per acre; considering the backwardness of agriculture and the consequent low output as well as the smallness of the average holding of the cultivator, this is a very high incidence. But the actual amount paid by the cultivator in the irrigated tracts is much more than this, taking into account other indirect taxes on land such as cess, contributions for the expenses of guarding the canal zones etc. The actual amount paid goes up to 35 per cent of the net produce. All these liabilities have to be liquidated in cash; consequently the cultivator finds it necessary to sell his crop immediately after the harvest. This forced sale makes it impossible for him to get a fair price. Thus, while on the one hand the productivity and therefore the value of land is increased, the wealth in possession of the peasantry, on the other hand, is increased. He toils on his land to sell out his produce at a low price, and has to incur debts in order to obtain seeds and capital for sowing and cultivating his land the next year. This bankrupt position of the peasantry is greatly helping the commercialisation of agriculture. The cultivation of non-food crops is increasing, while that of food-crops is decreasing proportionately. Finding himself under all kinds of liabilities to the government as well as to the money-lender, the peasant is forced to grow the crops in demand for industrial use in preference to food grain, because the former are sold more readily and at a higher price.

The following table containing percentage of increase in the area as well as yield of the principal food and non-food crops, shows the change in the agrarian economy of India :

<i>Crops</i>	<i>Unit in 1900</i>	<i>Increase in yield 1919(%)</i>	<i>Increase in area 1919(%)</i>
Rice	100	50	50
Wheat	100	50	30
Cotton	100	100	90

<i>Crops</i>	<i>Unit in 1900</i>	<i>Increase in yield 1919(%)</i>	<i>Increase in area 1919(%)</i>
Jute	100	70	60
Oil Seeds	100	105	60
Tea	100	200	55

The output of rice, the staple of the larger part of the population, has never been in excess of the needs during the last 6 years; but in 1919-20 there was a striking expansion in the shipment of non food articles like cotton (both raw and manufactured), jute (raw and manufactured), oil seeds, tea etc. The value of food grains exported in 1919-20 was £7,200,000 in excess of that of 1913-14, whereas the value of non-food agricultural product exported was £60,610,000 more. In 1909-10 jute and cotton exports had constituted 13 per cent and 10 per cent, while in 1919-20 they were respectively 24 per cent and 19 per cent of the total export.

Taking into consideration the fact that a great bulk of raw materials like jute and cotton is of late consumed in the large scale industries developing in the country, it is evident that the production of non-food crops must have increased much more than is shown by the rise in export figures. And this increase must have been at the cost of food grains, since the increase in the total area under cultivation has not been considerable. In the last two years the movement has been decidedly to the contrary. The total cropped area decreased by 12 per cent and the extent of cultivated land lying fallow increased by 50 per cent. Besides, there is another factor to be taken into consideration, viz., there is a tendency towards decrease in the area under more than one crop a year. Only in one year (1918-19) the decrease was from 37,000,000 acres of 27,000,000 acres. Neither have modern methods of cultivation been introduced in the area under non-food crops to any appreciable extent. Therefore, obviously, the

proportion of land under non-food crops needed for industrial purposes in India as well as in foreign countries, is increasing and that under food crops conversely, is decreasing.

From this movement of crops it is evident that the agricultural industry, on which by far the greater part of the rural population of India depends, is ceasing to be determined by the needs of the cultivators themselves. It is becoming commercialised, and has become so to a great extent already. Capitalist industry and commerce, British as well as native, have in their hands the control of Indian agriculture. Or in other words the Indian peasant is the victim of capitalist exploitation, and is becoming more so every day. The big landholder, small tax-farmer, money-lender, country trader, land-speculator, liberal intellectual with his capital invested in land, as well as the government, under whose collective and several economic pressure the Indian peasant is reduced to a state of abject and chronic poverty, are consciously or unconsciously all parts of one and the same structure of capitalist exploitation which holds the country in its hand.

A study of the production and export of agricultural commodities in India will give a further insight into the economic condition of the rural population. It will also show that the exchange value of the produce of the comparatively backward and seemingly individualistic agriculture of the country, has become pre-dominant over its use value. Let us begin by giving a summary of the total agricultural production in amount as well as in price, of the last year (1919-20):

**Total Agricultural, Production  
1919-20**

<i>Articles</i>		<i>Amount</i>	<i>Price</i>
Rice	Tons	33,956,000	£ 684,552,960
Wheat	"	10,297,000	209,244,280
Sugar	"	3,000,000	80,096,800

<i>Articles</i>		<i>Amount</i>	<i>Price</i>
Tea	Lbs	337,055,600	18,527,780
Cotton in bales of 400	"	480,000	342,063,000
Jute in bales of 400	"	8,482,000	101,790,360
Linseed	Tons	430,000	13,826,680
Rape and Mustard seed	"	1,200,000	37,296,000
Sesamum	"	614,000	24,558,000
Ground nuts	"	800,000	10,200,000
Indigo	Cwts	446,000	2,200,000
Barley	Maunds*	58,540,000	29,270,000
Jawar	"	153,660,000	96,005,000
Baj	"	80,500,000	56,350,000
Maize	"	58,540,000	31,026,000
Gram	"	900,000	72,000,000
Minor products including fruits	"	—	181,005,480
Total in round numbers		£ 2,000,000,000	

In comparison with the pre-war standard, the price of food stuff has gone up 76 per cent wholesale and 400 per cent retail. If the cultivator had been the owner of his produce after having liquidated all his legal liabilities in revenue, rents, and taxes, he would be in a rather prosperous position today, since 90 per cent of the food consumed in India is produced in the country. The following figures about the rise in the price of a few staples will give an idea as to the general increase in the wealth produced by agriculture:

<i>Articles</i>	<i>Selling prices calculated 1913</i>	<i>in seers per rupee 1920</i>
Wheat	14 seers	6 seers
Rice	10 seers	4 seers
Grains	20 seers	7 seers
Pulses	12 seers	4.5 seers
Meat	4 seers	1.8 seers

\* The Indian unit of measure, Maund, is equivalent to about 70 pounds.

Now, when the price of food-stuffs has gone up so tremendously, what has been the effect on the cultivators who produce these articles and who are supposed to be proprietors of the produce of their toil, if not of their land? We can just as well have the peasant's life described in the words of Sir O'Moore Creagh, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.

‘‘The peasant digs, sows and reaps, the rain falls and the crops prosper and are reaped, but no sooner is the harvest over than the crop is divided. The landlord, be he government or a great landlord, takes the lion's share. The village shop-keepers and the village servants are paid from what remains, when the producer has nothing left. The money-lender, town Vakil (lawyer) and medical men cannot squeeze him drier than they do. He again gets credit for his food and seed for the next crop from the village shop-keeper, which cost him dear, and he goes home to plough, sow and live in the hope of a better time which never comes.’’

So, this is the condition of the great bulk of the population engaged in the principal industry of the country—an industry whose production is increasing as far as possible within the bounds of its backwardness, and the value of whose produce has gone up almost fabulously. Then, who is benefited by the increase of production as well as rise in price? Into whose hand falls the wealth produced by the peasantry? To the Government, Zamindar and the land speculator goes a part in the form of revenue, rent and tax; and the rest, which is the more considerable part, goes to swell capital, both foreign and native—commercial as well as industrial. So the agricultural population of India is the victim of a system of exploitation which works through various agencies in various ways.

It is held by nationalist economists that the enormous rise in prices and the resulting misery of the peasantry is due to the export of food grains. On the face of it, it looks reasonable, but facts do not corroborate the contention. Of

the £ 180,000,000 which constituted the approximate value of the total agricultural produce exported from India in the year of 1919-20, only a little more than £ 42,000,000 was covered by food-stuffs. This cannot be called a very considerable amount. It is an increase of 16.5 per cent over the value of the food grains exported in 1913-14. But the prices have gone up by 75 per cent wholesale, not taking into account the tremendous rise in retail price. How is the difference of 50 per cent to be explained? Evidently there is great speculation in food-stuff going on inside the country. The produce of the land is controlled by trades capital, which by various means expropriates the peasant of the fruit of his toil, in order to sell it back to him for a price several times higher.

Large scale capitalist farms do not exist in India, agricultural production is mostly in the hands of small farmers producing on their own account. The only exceptions to this are the tea plantations and other minor cases. This being the case, ordinarily the total net income of the agricultural classes of India in 1919-20 should have been £ 1,611,000,000. This figure is obtained by subtracting from the total value produced, £ 327,000,000 exported. £ 52,000,000 paid in land rent and £ 10,000,000 paid in other taxes and contributions indirectly connected with the land. If this amount is divided among the 209,000,000 people, including land workers living on land, there results a per capita of £8; but according to official statistics, the per capita income of the entire Indian population is calculated at less than £2. This is the average; that is, when the income of the rich which is included in the average, is taken into consideration, that of the poor is reduced to very little. So there must be some social element which absorbs by far the greater part of this £8 that would belong to the peasant otherwise. The rise in the price of food-stuff as well as other agricultural produce means the prosperity of this social class on the one hand, and poverty and starvation for the cultivator on the other. This class

is the Indian bourgeoisie, the tale of whose rather spectacular development has been told in the preceeding part. The wealth wrung from the peasantry is being accumulated in the hand of the Indian bourgeoisie and invested by it in a more profitable field—modern industry. Of course it is to be understood that British capital still holds the monopoly of exploiting India ; but a certain class has always tried to break the absoluteness of this monopoly, and of late has grown to the status of a powerful competitor who will no longer be ignored and is thus being invited into the corporation as a junior partner.

As in the industrial field, so in the agricultural, India has for a long time been reduced to capitalist exploitation, without receiving the benefits of capitalist development. In the industrial field, as shown before, handicrafts were destroyed in competition with higher means of production, the artisan class was pauperised, but the city proletariat in the strictest sense of the term, did not come into existence till very late. Likewise, while it is long since the land as well as the agricultural produce came under capitalist economy, the cultivation of the soil was left largely in the hands of small farmers given to backward processes of production. Since agriculture remained undeveloped, the population engaged in this industry could not even derive the little benefits that accrue as side-issues of capitalist exploitation. Although it is true that in case he would not be by one way or other expropriated of the scanty produce of his land and labour, the Indian cultivator could save himself and his family from starvation, still it is a known fact that the actual agricultural production of the country is very low, and the methods and implements used for tilling the soil are almost primitive. Since agriculture had for a long, long time been the main national industry of India, the land and its produce have always been the means of speculation conducted by traders as well as usury capital. A helpless victim of the money-lender, the Indian peasant has always been in great lack of working

capital. This conspicuous lack of wealth accumulated in the hand of the cultivator prevented the development of a class of rich farmer-proprietors who could avail themselves of the modern means of production in order to augment their income. The greater part of the burden of supporting the society falls on the back of the Indian cultivator, who has always been ground down to the earth. The wealth in the hand of the peasantry at the present time can be judged from the following figures.

In 1919 the total number of livestock amounted to 150,000,000 bovines (bulls, oxen, buffaloes and cows), 56,000,000 ovines (sheep, goats etc.) and 5,000,000 pack animals. The number of ploughs and carts in the same year was 19,500,000 and 5,000,000 respectively. These figures are only for British India, those for the Native States not being available. The method of cultivation is very backward: the old-fashioned hand-made plough-share is still in vogue; and the ploughing is practically all done by cattle, the use of mechanical implements being very limited.

Small scale farming and backward methods of cultivation are the causes of low production. Density of population and lack of fertile waste land, to a great extent have prevented the growth of large scale farming in India. Although low in proportion to the area, the total amount of agricultural production of the country has always been considerable and it has greatly increased in the last half a century. This production was found to be sufficient for the industrial and commercial needs of the British bourgeoisie. So instead of investing its capital in agriculture as has been done in other colonies, the British bourgeoisie found it more profitable to develop first the means of communication and transport, in order to bring the entire agricultural produce of the country under capitalist exploitation. The Indian bourgeoisie was encouraged to invest its accumulated wealth in trade, tax-farming and land speculation. For a long time the Indian bourgeoisie occupied the place of a speculating middleman dependent on the capitalist structure of the foreign bourgeoisie. Therefore large scale



farming was not developed by native capital either. The production increased very little in proportion to the degree of exploitation of the producing class. The result has been the impoverishment of the latter. The incurable economic bankruptcy of the agrarian population of India is due to the fact that a backward and antiquated method of production has been reduced to the most modern and highly developed form of exploitation.

The British rulers have always followed the policy of exploiting the peasantry through the medium of a native agency—at first the permanent Zamindars, then the temporary tax-farmers, the village headman and always the native trading and money lending class. These privileged classes sucked and still suck the blood of the cultivator under the auspices of the government, in return for the meritorious services they render to the latter. These parasitic elements participate in the traffic in production without in any way helping to increase production. They have been grafted on the body of social production and distribution by the policy of imperialist capital, by which for a considerable time the normal growth of the native bourgeoisie has been prevented. The principal factor in the ruin of the Indian peasantry is usury. The pent-up energy of the capital debarred from a freer field of investment expresses itself through usury, which takes its most virulent form in advancing seeds to the peasant. As stated before, the usurer, trader and often the land holder, are as a rule united in the same person. In olden days the cultivator used to be at the mercy of the money-lender as a result of his futile efforts to liquidate the never-to-be satisfied demands of the landlord; of late the rise in prices puts the peasant more under his control. In order to pay rent, the cultivator borrows seeds or money at an excessive rate of interest, which often goes up as high as 600 per cent and is never lower than 100 per cent. The loan sometimes takes the form of conditional sale by which, in case of default in payment of interest within a specified time, the mortgaged leasehold passes to the creditor automatically. The harvest is often sold to the trader even

before sowing. Thus it is not the peasant nor the big landholder, but the trader and usurer, who are the practical owners of the agricultural produce of the country.

Formerly, and still to a great extent, the landholder and the trader were the usurers. But in 1914, the government decided to include usury in the general scheme of capitalist exploitation. This was done by passing the Co-operative Credit Societies Act, ostensibly designed to benefit and protect the cultivator. But the real object was to centralise usury-capital under the supervision of the State, in order that the former might not prejudice agricultural production by its irresponsible methods. On account of the fabulous exactions of usury capital, in the beginning of the century, the land was passing into the hands of speculating non-agriculturists at an alarming rate. This naturally affected production. The British bourgeoisie, with its advanced means of production and more developed consciousness, again came to the rescue; it had already 'freed' a considerable portion of the peasantry from feudal serfdom; now came the time to 'protect' it against a backward form of exploitation. Another motive behind this move was to find an outlet for the capital accumulated in the hands of the petty bourgeoisie. The Co-operative Credit Societies have grown fairly well. In 1918 there existed 32,439 of them with a capital of £17,554,000 of which only 1.9 per cent constituted state aid. In 1900 the number of Co-operative Credit Societies was 3498. The Co-operative Credit Societies flourish more in those provinces where big landholders do not exist. By reducing the rate of interest the cultivator has to pay, on the loan he must contract under any circumstances in order to be able to sow and harvest his land, the credit institution has stabilised him on his land, thus safeguarding agricultural production. On the other hand, supported by the petty bourgeoisie, which has its capital invested in them, the government through these credit societies can exercise the minutest control over the agrarian economy of the village. When the land does pass out of the hands of the cultivator.

it is no longer to be a mere object of speculation; but the present tendency is to have it concentrated in the shape of large scale capitalist farms.

The poverty of the peasantry has become so chronic and the chances of any radical change so non-existent that a complete agrarian revolution remains as the only solution. Neither the reformed land policy of the government, nor the frankly conservative, if not reactionary programme of the nationalist movement, offers any prospect for betterment. The growth of large scale farms worked by machinery would deprive millions of a livelihood; and a step back to landlordism would make the progress of people today living on land, retrograde. The population is so vast that it would be impossible for the modern industries, even if they increase to a hundredfold their present magnitude, to absorb the mass of unemployed which would come into existence as a result of an extensive introduction of labour-saving machinery in agriculture. Besides, the growth of industry would throw into unemployment another large section of the population, the artisans. Thus nothing short of a radical readjustment of the national economy can improve the situation. There must be a revolution in order to change not only the superstructure, but the very basis of social-economics.

Significant signs of this coming revolution are to be found in various parts of the country. The peasantry is revolting. Although there have been isolated instances of peasant revolts from time to time during the last century and a half, it is only in recent years that the agrarian trouble has assumed an acute and widespread aspect in the national life of the country. The first agrarian revolt during the British period occurred in 1835-38 when the English indigo planters, together with the newly created Bengal Zamindars, endeavoured to reduce the small farmers to a state of serfdom. The uprisings were of quite a serious nature and were headed by the liberal intelligentsia. The revolt was ultimately crushed, but the government passed legislation

restricting the rights of the English Squires transplanted into India, and of native landlords, to revive a dead and uncivilised form of exploitation under a full-fledged bourgeois regime. In 1877, the peasants in the centre of Bombay Presidency revolted against the excessive rate of taxation imposed by the Zamindars as well as by the government. In 1907 there took place in the northern part of the province of Punjab, serious agrarian disturbances which had to be quelled by the declaration of martial law. This movement was due to the exorbitant increase of canal taxation; as a result of the riots, the canal administration was somewhat reformed.

During years and decades the forces have been accumulating; the economic position of the peasantry was becoming absolutely hopeless. At last came the period of enormous rise in prices during the war. This brought the situation to a climax. The condition of the peasantry became so bad that riots began to break out in different parts. In 1917 a series of uprisings occurred in the province of Bihar; this movement was directed against the big landholders, who had increased the rent by 25 per cent in spite of the failure of crops and the rise in prices. Since then the peasant movement has been spreading in other provinces; at the present moment the entire north of the country is affected and of late the movement has broken out in the south in the form of Mopla rising. The agrarian troubles are assuming such tremendous proportions that they are causing growing disquietude among the Indian bourgeoisie, which never took the agrarian problem seriously in its political reckoning. A member of the Legislative Assembly from Madras writes:

“If the government believes that the present taxes can be continued or that fresh taxes can be levied or that the unfortunate owner of small holdings can be ground down any further, they would be living in a fool’s paradise. They would be instrumental in this country in giving impetus to the agrarian unrest which is slowly developing itself all over the peninsula.”

Making due concession to the typical bourgeois nationalist psychology of throwing all the blame on the foreign ruler, one can find in these words the recognition of the seriousness of the agrarian unrest. Now let us have the estimation of the peasant movement from another source. A member of the Punjab Provincial Legislative Council, in his speech, moving a resolution to amend the land laws, expressed the following sentiment :

"In coming to a just decision on this point we must bear in mind that a vast majority of land proprietors in the Punjab possess small holdings from 3 to 10 acres. If it is true, and it is true, that these wretched proprietors are living from hand to mouth; if it is true, and it is true, that they are generally ill-fed, ill-clothed and without any education, then I say, with all deference to the official point of view, that the Land Revenue Administration in India generally, and in Punjab particularly, has not succeeded. The condition of the agriculturists, labourers and cultivators, is even worse, and the agrarian movement in the neighbouring provinces is not without causes. The origin of such movements as communism, nihilism, and agrarian movements lies in the stomach "

So we find that the rebellious mood of the peasantry is becoming so manifest that it is causing alarm to the government and the landed aristocracy alike. Both are very much concerned in checking it. Before the Imperial as well as the Provincial Legislative Councils are being brought various measures and suggestions for the re-adjustment of land settlement. But since none of the parties, by virtue of their belonging to the exploiting class, is capable of striking at the root of the trouble, the situation is getting more serious and complicated.

Since 1918, the peasant movement in the north of the country has become a standing affair. Local risings and riots are very frequent and of such a serious nature that the military is often called in to cope with the situation. Appreciating the potentiality of the agrarian movement, the Indian

National Congress admitted in its session of 1916 a great number of peasant delegates. But the bourgeois political movement has demonstrated its utter inability to understand as well as to lead the agrarian movement.

In the winter of 1920, the agrarian movement broke out in the most violent form ; it almost assumed the proportions of an insurrection. This happened in the province of Oudh, where the Zamindari system prevails and the power of the landholders is very extensive. The peasants' actions were well organised ; they were directed only against the rich landholders, until the government sent troops to protect their lives and properties. Houses were burnt, estates looted and crops destroyed by the rioters. The immediate cause of this serious outbreak had been the high-handed methods with which the Talookdars (big landholders) extracted from the cultivators the large sums of money which the former had contributed to the war fund in the previous years. This made the already heavy economic burden, caused by excessive taxation and rise in prices, unbearable for the poor peasants. Of course, the government rushed to the aid of the propertied class, and crushed the revolt with military force. But the movement has not died; on the contrary it is steadily spreading to other parts. These agrarian disturbances have, during the course of the last year, crystallized into a political movement, the character and activities of which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

The latest phase of the agrarian trouble is the Mopla risings, on the coast of Malabar. Subsequent informations show that the movement has been advancing to the east coast as well. The Moplas are the descendents of the Arab traders who came to India centuries ago. Their number does not exceed a million. They are very poor, agriculture being their means of livelihood, and have always been under the thumb of the money-lenders, who are Hindus. The majority of the big landholders in that part of the country also happen to be Hindus. The recent revolt is

caused by purely economic causes. It was started by looting the houses of the landholders and money-lenders, with a demand for remission of rent for getting back the land that had been concentrating in the hands of the speculator and capitalist agents. But in every instance of peasant disturbance the government promptly demonstrates its class affiliation by rendering military aid to the landholders, thus the class differentiation of Indian society is brought into evidence for those who care to see it. The Zamindars and landholders may struggle with the government to maintain their privileged position, unchanged by the new economic policy of the latter; and the government may 'protect' the cultivator from the abuses committed by the Zamindar; but as soon as the peasant revolts against the system that starves him to death, he finds the ranks closed in the enemy camp. Such is the social and economic position of the agricultural population of India. It stands between two classes of exploiters namely, the foreign capitalist, and native landholder, usurer and trader. The two may disagree and struggle about the share each should have in the exploitation, but both of them are identical in their fundamental social significance—they live and thrive on the labour of the toiler, be he a worker in the factory or cultivator of the soil.

### **3. The Proletariat—I**

#### **Historical and Social Background**

The class of industrial workers living exclusively on wages earned in cities, is a comparatively recent phenomenon in Indian society. Of course, since in 1820 the first coal mine was worked by mechanical process, the beginning of the steam railways dates as far back as 1853 and the first factory moved by steam power was built in 1851, workers were employed in these industries; and the number of industrial workers went on increasing in proportion to the growth of these modern industries. But, as has been shown in the previous parts, in

a wide sense, India did not enter an industrial age till 1880, and the real industrialisation of the country began still later. Therefore, though existing in small numbers and confined to a few localities, the proletarian class did not become a factor in the social organism till rather late.

This belated growth of the city proletariat is naturally due to the retarded industrial development of the country. Until very recently, India remained an agricultural land, and even today she is predominantly so, 72 per cent of her entire population being engaged in and living on the cultivation of the soil. But when we take into consideration the fact that in 1911 no less than 87 per cent of the entire population was dependant on agriculture and auxiliary industries, the rapidity with which the country is being industrialised becomes evident. It is needless to say that India did not choose to remain in a backward state of national economy so late as in the earlier years of the twentieth century; nor was it that the conservatism of her people and the shyness of native capital were the factors responsible for her industrial backwardness, as is held by the imperialist historian and is commonly believed. If the Indian people remained victims of conservatism till so late it was not due to some peculiar characteristic of theirs, but because the great revolutionary agency, modern machinery, did not come into the country to shake the society to its very roots and make national conservatism an impossibility. And it was not that modern machinery was kept out of the country because the Indian people had a special dislike for it, but because it happened that by one of those ironies of history, the capitalist class which has used machine power to enslave the workers in other parts of the world, found it more profitable to do without it in India. If the wealthy class of Indian society came to the industrial field so late, it was not from any instinctive aversion to the pursuit on its part, but because the abnormal political condition of the country prevented it from developing along the same lines as did its peers in other land. The economic development of India through the



introduction of power-driven means of production, was not allowed for a considerable time by the foreign bourgeoisie which usurped the political power. Not being able to utilise the political State power, the Indian middle class could not enlist the aid of mechanical inventions in order to exploit the natural riches and labour power of the country. Large scale machine-production, which in the countries of western Europe made the trading class grow into a liberal bourgeoisie, and snatched the artisan from his tool and the peasant from his soil in order to herd them into crowded cities, affected Indian society in an entirely different way. In order to reap the full benefit of machine-production in one country, the foreign rulers found it profitable to keep machinery out of India.

Just at the same time that the spinning-jennies and fly-shuttles were contributing to the rapid growth of the Lancashire towns in which masses of ruined craftsmen were forced into factories, the product of the same mechanical agencies was creating a contrary effect in India. The imported cotton manufacturers, forced upon the Indian market by the foreign conqueror, wrought havoc among the native weavers, but instead of driving them to factories, made them change their tools for the plough-share. The introduction of higher means of production in cotton manufacture marked an era of social and economic progress in England, but it had a retrograde effect upon India. The forces that helped to build so many industrial centres in the former, were used for the destruction of prosperous towns and urban industrial centres in the latter. The reason of this diametrically opposite effect of the same cause was that Indian as well as English society came under a more developed method of exploitation, but the improved means of production which made this new method of exploitation possible, remained the property of the bourgeoisie of one country, which became the political ruler of the other. Every force, physical or social, has two attributes—destructive and constructive, negative and positive. Whereas England felt both the effects

of the social force expressed through the mechanical inventions of the eighteenth century, in India, which became an economic and political dependency of England in consequence of the expansion of the system created by this force, only the negative, the destructive effect was felt. The self-same force of exploitation, which distinguished itself by bringing into existence the infamous century of slave-labour and child torture in England, contributed to the breaking up of the artisan class of Bengal, but without bringing in its train great industrial cities with swarms of slum-dwellers, the progenitors of the mighty modern proletariat.

In the first part of the eighteenth century the economic structure of Indian society corresponded to that stage which precedes the industrial epoch. Handicraft was very highly developed; and a thriving trading class had grown, based on the productions of the prosperous and industrious artisan. Trade and industry had led to the rise of towns, rich and populous. When Clive entered Murshidabad, the then capital of the Kingdom of Bengal, he found the city "as extensive, populous, and rich as the city of London, with this difference, that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last". Clive saw Murshidabad in 1757. When in the 80's of the eighteenth century the city of Dacca, the capital of East Bengal, came under the domination of the East India Company, it had a population of 200,000 and its export of manufactured articles was so large that the value of only one commodity, namely muslin, amounted to £ 300,000 a year. Nor were these exceptional cases; all over the country, and especially in the province of Bengal, trade and industry flourished, and these had been concentrated in urban centres. Indian society was no longer confined within the narrow limits of agrarian economy. Industry had ceased to be a mere part of the village organism; it had grown too big for the necessities of the village communities and thus had long ago transgressed the boundaries of the village and diverged to the large urban centres.

there to be commercialised by a wealthy trading class. It is very often forgotten that the economic relation of the Western nations with the East, and particularly India, is not the same today as it was in the beginning of the eighteenth century. European traders were first attracted to the Indies not by raw materials but by manufactured wares. By the end of the eighteenth century, the textile industry of Bengal was so well controlled by native trades capital and capitalist exploitation had obtained such a high degree of efficiency "that cotton and silk goods of India up to 1813 could be sold for a profit in the British market from 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England". (*H.H Wilson, History of India.*)

Such was the economic condition of India when industrialisation took place in England and subsequently in other European countries. While the most highly developed imperialism of today is marked by the export of capital to the colonies, the movement was the reverse in the early days of imperialism. Then wealth was imported from the colonies; and this imported wealth helped greatly the growth of modern industry. But curious as it may seem, the product of these capitalist industries not only prevented but destroyed the growth of industrial capitalism in the colonies. India is the most remarkable example of how capitalism, being by its very nature a force of social progress, has nevertheless led to social stagnation, if not retrogression. The capitalist industries built in England with slum-labour as their social basis aided greatly by the wealth imported from the colonies, were solidified and extended endlessly by selling their products in countries like India, to the serious economic detriment of the latter. Although India, in respect of craft and trade, stood on the eve of capitalist industrialism in the eighteenth century, the general economic tendency since then has been more towards agriculture and less and less towards manufacture. This state of economic affairs held good till the closing years of the nineteenth century, when the social forces of history broke the bonds

of artificial restriction and asserted themselves. Thus it was not less than a century and a half that India was held in an abnormal state of economic progress. The expression 'abnormal state of economic progress' sounds strange; but it expresses exactly what took place in India during the period from the middle of the eighteenth century till the end of the nineteenth. The political control of the country passed to the bourgeoisie, which, however, happened to be foreign. Under the political rule of the bourgeoisie the economic exploitation of the society could not remain in the fetters of antiquated methods. Gradually the entire production of the land was brought under capitalist exploitation on the one hand, and manufactures of capitalist industries destroyed to a great extent the backward form of craft production, on the other. So the national economy could not be said to have stayed stationary, since under the capitalist system of modern political regime of the bourgeoisie, the total production of the country increased; but the power of productivity and the kind of produce were determined by the needs and convenience of foreign capital, which reigned supreme. The economic basis of social production underwent a radical change in consequence of the fact that a capitalist government ruled the country, but no great transformation took place in the form and method of production. The productivity and labour power of India were included in the general scheme of capitalist exploitation, but she had to remain on the outskirts, occupying the place of a reserve force, so to say.

The industries of England needed a market as well as raw materials. India promised to supply both. But an India with her own modern industrial production would cease to do so. Therefore, the same British capitalist class, which found the machine an invaluable instrument of exploitation in the home country, prevented its introduction into India. While at home, machinery aided the English capitalist, in India the absence of it was found to be more conducive to the interest of the foreign bourgeoisie. If Great Britain is what it is today as the result of Capitalist production, India is what

she is today due to capitalist exploitation. If capitalism has concentrated 67 per cent of the population of the British Isles in the cities, it is also capitalism which has driven 75 per cent of the population of India to the soil. While the proportion of the total population of India engaged in arts and crafts was 25 per cent in the latter part of the eighteenth century, it dropped to 15 per cent a hundred years later. At the time of the British conquest, in the province of Bengal alone, several million people were occupied in the weaving and spinning industry; the numerical strength of this class of artisans is reduced to less than half a million at present. This is, of course, the consequence of higher forms of production introduced into the textile industry. But how negative has been the effect of mechanical inventions in India, may be judged from the fact that in the beginning of the present century the number of operatives in the power-driven cotton textile factories of the country was less than 200,000. It shows that machine production eliminated from the field of social economics an older form of production without replacing it, as in other modern countries, by large scale capitalist industries. This method of imperialist exploitation dislocated the social organism. Millions and millions of people were deprived of the means of livelihood by the destruction of craft industries brought about by the import of machine-made commodities, but modern industries were not allowed to grow in the country; thus the artisans ousted from their craft by the machine could not be tied to the same machine as wage slaves. The Indian artisans, after having lost their independent means of production, were not absorbed into large industrial centres, but were driven to the land. In India, the social expression of machine production did not take the form of a city proletariat, but that of a vast mass of land-workers and pauperised peasantry.

In order that a class-differentiation of the present Indian society be properly understood, it is necessary to make a brief review of the process by which the country was reduced to capitalist exploitation without having felt the social

re-adjustment that comes in the train of capitalist development. The economic transformation of Indian society has gone through such confusing up-and-down, backward and forward stages during the last two hundred years, that not a little difficulty is encountered, even by the modern minded Indians themselves, in determining its present character and the immediate outcome, social and political. There is a tendency to think that Indian society is not divided into classes but castes. This tendency assumes active expression in the social theories of the liberal reformers of the nationalist movement. This tribe of social reformers can be divided into two categories; the radical religionists with strong national jingoism and the class-conscious modern bourgeoisie with liberal tendencies. The first take upon themselves the great task of proving that Indian culture has been a unique thing, that it developed in its own way and that the structure of Indian society has not been subject to the action and reaction of material laws. And, following this course of reasoning, these apostles of Indian culture come to the conclusion that the class-struggle never soiled the sanctity of Indian society, and that it is never going to be the principal factor in the process of social readjustment. They preach that class-struggle is the peculiar outcome of the materialist civilization of the West and is not possible in Indian society, which is based on the knowledge, of the spiritual essence of man. 'Gandhism' is the political expression of this social movement. The second class of social reformers is the modern bourgeoisie. They are the disciples of the 18th century school of economics, and their philosophy is that of the nineteenth century freethinkers and utilitarians. No national egoism can make them blind to the class cleavage in Indian society; but class egoism, the idea that by the dint of their education and privileged positions they are the custodians of national interests makes them diffuse the social character of the present struggle. They encourage the development of a modernised version of religion, whose futile fuss about caste seeks to drown the din of class struggle. These

bourgeois reformers, who are the most conscious leaders of nationalism, are very much interested in the uplift of the 'depressed' classes; and while holding thousands of wage-slaves in perpetual starvation do not hesitate in the least to have them shot when these slaves show signs of revolt, in order to uplift themselves.

It has been shown in the preceding chapter how the Indian peasantry, in spite of their belonging to various castes and to the two great antagonistic religions, namely Hinduism and Islam, have been always weighed down in misery by the landlords, usurers, and traders; and how, at the present moment, the agrarian revolts are the result of accentuated class differentiation, the political movement for national liberation notwithstanding. We do not want to go into an analysis of the caste system. But it is necessary to throw a look back on history to ascertain what was the economic basis of caste. In Hindu scriptures and classics the caste system is glorified in various ingenious ways. But coming down to the origin of it one discovers slavery. The caste-line was first between the Aryan conquerors and the conquered aborigines. The distinction was made by colour, the conqueror being fair and the conquered dark. The Sanskrit word for caste is *Varna* which means colour. The divisions and sub-divisions in the caste system were subsequently evolved in accordance with the intermixture between the conquered and the conquering races, and the development of tools. The social growth followed almost the same process of evolution as in the savage and barbaric periods in the human society everywhere, only with certain modifications in the super-structure, caused by local circumstances. The physical and climatic conditions told heavily upon the structure of Indian society. Slavery, Feudalism, Serfdom—all took somewhat different forms. The country being mostly flat, and the fertility of the soil almost uniform, the distribution of population was rather even. For a considerable time and up to very recent date, the village formed the social unit, and the village community was

based upon the hereditary division of labour stereotyped into the caste system, which in the commercial and manufacturing epoch, developed into trade and craft guilds, resembling greatly their prototype in contemporary Europe. Caste was the basis of socio-economic organized production, but did not prevent exploitation. The class-line ran through the caste-system. So when in recent years, by virtue of the increasing introduction of machine-made commodities and the growth of modern industry inside the country, caste has ceased to be a living social factor, its economic essence—the class division—stands naked. Neither the hollow shell of the decayed caste system, nor the lingering traces of religion and priest-craft, nor the great movement for national freedom, can hide the class-line which divides the whole social organism horizontally into two distinct parts.

It is held that the great bulk of the Indian people still live in such an economically backward stage, that it will be long before the class differentiation will be clear in the society. The caste system is also looked upon as a factor which diffuses the class cleavage between exploiter and exploited. It is said that even the exploited class is divided into castes which prevent them from understanding their unity of interest. There are some who go as far as to say that a worker feels himself more akin to his employer if he be of the same caste, than to his fellow worker of another caste. It will be shown later that the facts disprove all these pre-conceived ideas. The main argument is, however, that capitalism has not come to India, therefore the things that accompany the capitalist mode of production cannot be found there. This is a wrong theory and all types of confusions arise from it. First, capitalist exchange and, to a certain extent, production of commodities prevailed in India at the time of, and even before, the British conquest. Secondly, the British government is the political apparatus of the capitalist class. India, therefore could not have been left untouched by capitalist exploitation under its rule.



During the hundred and seventy years of British rule, the social production of India has been reduced completely under capitalist economy. But, since the capitalist exploitation was carried on by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie, the outward effects of the capitalist mode of production were not clearly felt on the Indian society. Nevertheless, the fundamental social transformations that result from the capitalist control of national economy have taken place, and the present as well as the future of the country is bound to be determined by these transformations. It is necessary to investigate how these social transformations occurred without causing serious disequilibrium on the surface.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the English merchant invaders were establishing their political domination in some parts of the country, India economically stood at a stage which under a normal course of development would have led up to modern capitalist industrialism. Although industrial production was still based on the hereditary craftsmanship according to the caste system, another class had developed which controlled the distribution of the commodities produced by the guilds. The hereditary artisan had ceased in many instances, to be an independent member of the autonomous village community. His production was no longer the property of the community to be exchanged by himself into other necessities produced by other equally independent members of the community. Arts and crafts which centuries ago had arisen as a part of village economy within the bonds of caste, had long ceased to be the exclusive concern of the isolated village, but were taken from one province to another in order to be sold and resold by a prosperous trading class with considerable capital accumulated in its hand. The principal industries had been commercialised and their base had been removed from the village confines to the towns, hundreds of which flourished all over the country. Still confined to the caste-guilds in so far as labour was concerned, the social and economic control of the industrial products had gone out of the hands of the

artisan. Instead of completely controlling production and distribution as before, the craftsman was supplied with raw materials by the trading middle-man, who took the finished product out of the former's hands, not to distribute according to the needs of the community, but to sell it for profit. By this class of traders, the artisans were spared the worries of securing raw materials, of exchanging their fabricated wares and looking about for other necessities of life. All these troubles had been taken over by the benevolent trader. Production was largely separated from the family and concentrated in towns under the control of Trades Capital. In the towns, manufactures had grown, employing often more than a hundred hands, who worked for the trading capitalist, and thus had ceased to be independent artisans of the olden days. Individual or domestic production was to a great extent displaced by collective production, but the ownership had been shifted from the producer to the mercantile class. The secondary, exchange value of industrial products had acquired predominance over the primal use value. Busy commerce had developed, bringing in its train a prosperous class of capitalists who controlled the economic life of the society, in spite of the fact that the old caste divisions still persisted in the field of production. The magnitude of commercial capitalism that prevailed in India about the middle of the eighteenth century can be judged from the testimony among many others, of Verelst, one of the first English Governors of Bengal. He writes : "The Bengal silks, cloths, etc. were dispersed to a vast amount to the West and North, inland as far as Gujrat, Lahore and even Ispahan." The stage of India's social economics and the rise and power of a capitalist class in the first part of the eighteenth century are borne out by the following words of Burke:

"There are to be found a multitude of cities not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers who have once vied in capital with the Bank of England, whose credit has often supported a

tottering state and preserved their governments in the midst of war and desolation, millions of indigenous manufacturers and mechanics."

Thus we find that at the time of the British invasion, India stood at the stage of social economics which would have been the period of transition of her industry from manufacture to mechanofacture. But it did not happen; the machine did not come to India. She could not pass from mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism. The social progress was obstructed. But the secret of the abnormal economic condition of India during a century and a half lies in the fact that with the machine, the effects of machine production were not kept out of the country. The destructive effects of machine production were fully felt on the national economy.

With the growth of machine industry in England, her economic relation with India changed. The trade was reversed. Instead of importing manufactured goods from India, the British East India Company began to export to India articles fabricated by machinery in England. The cost of production in India was so low that even the English machine industry had to be protected in its early days against Indian imports by the enormous duty of 80 per cent *ad valorem*. Owing to this protective tariff, but principally on account of the introduction of a higher form of production, Indian manufactured goods were not thrown out of the English market. But this was not all; the tables were turned before long. Cotton fabrics began to be exported from Lancashire to India. The cost of production in India was low, but that in England in those days was also low; besides the English manufacturers had the advantage of superior machinery. Thus, foreign mechanofacture was pitted against Indian manufacture. The result could not be anything but the collapse of the latter. Machine production destroyed craft-industry and trades capital in England as well as in India; but its effects on the economic distribution of the population were not the same. In both

countries the artisans were dispossessed of their means of livelihood; but while in England they were herded into the factories, in India they were driven back to the soil. But there, the land was over-crowded; so the influx of the mass of ruined artisans from the town created a serious dislocation in the agrarian population. The newcomers could not be accommodated without displacing others. This pressure on land provided a change of speculation to the trading class, undermined in the towns by the ruin of industry. Thus while in England, machine production attracted the people from the village to the city, and pushed the capitalist class from a lower to a higher form of exploitation—from trade to industry—in India, the effects of the same machine production happened to be the contrary. It drove the town artisans back to the village, thus reducing their standard of living and dragging the structure of national economy backward. It induced capital to take to petty-trading and land-speculation instead of entering upon an area of industrial development. In short, India was reduced from the state of a manufacturing country, to that of an agricultural country. But on account of the scarcity of land, the ruined artisans could not become peasants; there was no land to get, at least for a large number of people. Thus machine production did bring into existence in India also a vast number of people divested of all ownership. But the difference was, that instead of a city proletariat, there was born in India as a result of the evolution of higher means of production, a class of wage-earners tied to the land. Factories were not allowed to grow, thus these masses of the dispossessed could not do anything but become superfluous auxiliaries to agriculture. Since this vast number of agricultural workers came into being, unemployment has been a standing problem in India. On account of the small individual farms prevailing there, a large number of agricultural labourers could not be employed on the land with any steadiness. In consequence of this dislocation in the economic distribution of the Indian people, brought about by the one-sided influence of foreign machine production, a large section of the population could not be

absorbed into the economic organism of the society. The permanent presence of this mass of unemployed and unemployables in the country constituted a serious obstacle to the economic struggle of the city proletariat when the latter came into existence subsequently, as a result of the rather laborious and stunted growth of modern industry in India.

India was prevented from developing machine industry by two causes : First, in the early days of the rule of the British traders a tremendous amount of wealth was exploited and exported from the country without having brought anything in return. Second, in order to preserve the monopoly on the Indian market, the export of machinery from England to India was prohibited by imposing heavy custom duties. The heavy drain of wealth exhausted the economic vitality of India for a considerable time, thus disabling her capitalist class and preventing it from showing any active signs of struggle. The effects of the export duty on machineries were such that till the 60's of the last century, the cost of building a factory in India was four times as much as that required to build the same in England. And it was so, notwithstanding the cheapness of Indian labour. The British bourgeoisie, which by virtue of possessing higher means of production, imposed its political power upon India, found it very important to deprive the Indian capitalist class of the access to modern machine production. This policy was vital for the continuance of the exploitation of India by British capital. Looked at from the point of view of world economics, the social progress of India during the period from the middle of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth has not been retrograde. Indian society, which was at the period of mercantile capitalism at the time of the British conquest, has been brought under the exploitation of industrial finance and imperial capital. Political power went into the hands of the bourgeoisie which, for the convenience of unhampered exploitation, broke down, either violently or peacefully, all obstacles that stood in the way. The social production and economic life of India today are inseparably interwoven with

the structure of world capitalism. The agricultural industry to India is an adjunct of the British industrial system, and for this reason, 72 per cent of her population engaged in the cultivation of the earth, to all intents and purposes, occupy the social position of proletariat in the wide scheme of capitalist exploitation. Capitalist exploitation under the political rule of a liberal bourgeoisie, has helped to clarify the class differentiation as well. Though the Indian capitalist class was not allowed a free development, or to enlist in its service the modern mechanical inventions, it was not excluded altogether from the scheme of exploitation. As soon as its social aspirations were broken down in competition with a higher mode of production, its good offices were enlisted by the foreign ruler, who soon made out of it an admirable means of exploitation and the social basis upon which the extraneous political domination could rest.

So till the closing decades of the last century, the Indian capitalist remained a ridiculous adjunct to the imperial capital. It was not until the 80's that he demanded a more dignified position. This renaissance of Indian capitalism was marked by a strong tendency towards industrialism, and brought into being a city proletariat, separated from the ranks of a proletarian nation.

In the centuries preceding the British invasion, the development of industry and the consequent expansion of trade led to the growth of towns. The proportion of the population living in urban centres in the early part of the eighteenth century was greater than in the end of the nineteenth. A large section of the urban population was engaged in trades and industries. In proportion as industries were brought under control, the number of independent craftsmen were replaced by wage earners, complete or partial. So in the first half of the eighteenth century, there was a proletarian element in the urban population of India. But industrial capital affected India in a different way; instead of being a revolutionary social force, it pushed the country to a state of national economy which it had already passed beyond. In the early

years of British rule, Indian towns were destroyed by the products of English machine industry. The population of Dacca, one of the principal textile centres, diminished from 200,000 in 1770 to 90,000 in 1840. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the people living in urban centres were estimated to be 25 per cent of the entire population; at the end of the nineteenth the proportion had fallen to 15 per cent. The decadence of formerly flourishing towns occurred in all parts of the country, till new and modern cities began to be built; these did not grow up around industrial centres as happened in Europe, but on the sea-board, as a result of busy export and import trade, and inland, as administrative centres and as stations both for collecting raw materials to be exported and for bringing the imported manufactured goods within the reach of the people. Naturally, the great majority of the inhabitants of these new cities were wage-earners, but the absence of an industrial proletariat was conspicuous. The only national industry of any importance that was allowed to exist, or that could resist the attack of machine-made commodities, had to take shelter in the confines of far-away villages. The native trading class found it more profitable to sell cheap imported articles, than to handle the scanty produce of the bankrupt village artisans. Thus, even handicraft industry, which had been developed to the first stages of social production as far back as the end of the seventeenth century, was again pushed back on an individual basis. The new cities of India were not the outcome of the native social progress, but were the outposts of the foreign ruler and trade-counter of the foreign bourgeoisie. But this original artificial character of theirs soon changed; their petty bourgeoisie and pigmy intellectual wage-earning population gradually grew into the most progressive class of Indian society. Out of these elements, together with the progressive land-holder and country trader, arose the modern bourgeoisie. But the majority of them remained in an economic condition corresponding to that of the proletariat.

The economic and social position of the intellectual proletariat who form a great majority of the population of most of the modern cities, should not be passed unnoticed. In recent years, the enormous rise in the cost of living and the acute scarcity of accommodation, have driven most of these intellectual workers out of the city proper to the adjacent suburbs or villages, whence they come to work in the town every day. In social standard they belong to the intelligentsia; by profession they are clerks, ministerial employees in the government offices, assistants in the large trading firms, teachers, etc. The system of modern education introduced by the British government, opened the schools for all, irrespective of caste divisions. Anyone who could afford to meet the expenses, sent their children to the schools. A product of these schools, the intellectual workers are recruited from all castes. Today they all belong to the same class of wage-earners, though the artificial social traditions of caste-division still persist among them in so far as inter-marriage is not permitted. More than three-fourths of the intelligentsia, which constitutes 5 per cent of the total population, belong to the rank of intellectual workers. The economic condition of these people is absolutely miserable, and it is more so, considering the fact that psychologically they belong to the bourgeoisie and not to the work-ing class. Their mode of living is that of the former: but the standard falls very short, the average income of this class of workers is 20 rupees ( £ 2 at the present inflated rate of exchange) per month; and when the fact that each wage-earner has several dependents to support is taken into consideration, the actual rate of income goes down by many times. Their standard of living, in so far as clothes and dwelling are concerned, has to be higher than that of the manual worker; consequently, in actual nutrition they are worse off than the latter. Although many of them have come up from the lower castes, thanks to the modern semi-education, the environment in which they work has developed a petty bourgeois psychology in them. Depending on the



bourgeois institutions for their means of livelihood, they are supporters of the present system of society, in spite of the fact that in the latter they can never be anything more than wage-slaves.

Till a quarter of a century ago, all that had been felt on the surface of Indian society of the effects of modern capitalism was commerce organised on a large scale, and the bureaucratic administrative institutions which mark a capitalist state. These were the reflex of the industrial system of England. They were the integral parts of the scheme of exploitation of British industrial capital, which held India in subjugation. So the class proletarianised in India by imperialist capital was not so much the ruined and expropriated artisans; the latter, though reduced to the level of pauperised proletariat for all practical purposes, were pushed back to the land, to sink into an economic condition worse than that of the wage-earners. Capitalism, exploiting India through the media of commerce and bureaucracy, created a different kind of proletariat; this was the petty intellectual workers. The labour of this proletarian class was less muscular than mental, since all it could sell for a starvation wage was not so much intellectual assets, as the capacity to read, write, and count. The writing too, was not original; what was needed was a copying machine. But this class of petty intellectual workers, though economically belonging to the category of propertyless wage-earners, socially and psychologically clung to the bourgeois customs and tradition. Their economic condition was objectively destined to make them revolutionary, but their social prejudices not only prevented the growth of revolutionary class-consciousness, but actually dragged them deeper and deeper in the depths of decay and demoralisation. Still, it was from the ranks of this class of social slaves as well as from among the students that the revolutionary element in Indian nationalism arose. And when we consider the fact that 90 per cent of the students in the primary and secondary educational institutions are doomed to enter the ranks of the petty intellectual proletariat, the

class contradiction in the folds of the Indian nationalist movement becomes clear. Since the class of petty intellectual workers has always been directly exploited either by the government or English employers, it is but natural that the class-oppression should appear to it as foreign oppression. But this equilibrium is bound to be disturbed in proportion as the native capitalist class comes on the field to employ more and more petty, semi-manual workers. Inevitably the development of native industrialism will bring the factory-labourers to the front lines of the revolutionary ranks, in contradistinction to the petty intellectuals, despite the latter's completely proletarianised economic condition. During the recent years, this process of re-shuffling of the revolutionary forces has been going on in the Indian movement, and at the present moment it looks quite probable that class-consciousness will ere long transcend the limits of nationalist pre-occupations.

The economic cleavage between the propertied and wage-earning classes of the bourgeois society is becoming wider. The poor proprietor among the intelligentsia is being expelled from the blessed realm of ownership by the process of the concentration of wealth in the hands of those who know the art of converting wealth into capital. The following extracts from the report (1919-1922) of the Educational Commissioner of India, are indicative of the economic condition of the lower strata of the middle class:

“In Central Provinces there has been a further fall of nearly 15 per cent in the number of pupils in the High School Department. This was due to the high cost of living.... There is a drop in the number of pupils in the high stage of the United Provinces, due also to hard times. In the province of Bihar, there is a fall in the number of students, due to the same cause. But the colleges in all provinces are overcrowded. The decline in Bengal of middle English schools can be attributed to economic distress”

This shows that facilities for higher college and University education available to the rich are not sufficient, the

colleges being overcrowded, but the very scanty provision for secondary education cannot be fully availed of, because the petty intellectuals are finding themselves economically unable to send their children to the schools. And the diminution of secondary education in the ranks of the wage-earning semi-intellectuals signifies a corresponding fall in their prospect of finding employment.

In order to have a reserve force, the British government brought into existence more of these ministerial workers than could be absorbed in the present organism of the capitalist structure. Since the closing years of the past century, unemployment has prevailed in the lower strata, or the wage-earning section of the intelligentsia. This unemployed element grew till it became unemployable. And an element which finds no chance of getting fitted into the social organism, converts itself into a force of destruction. Even after the political independence of the country has been achieved, this army of petty and semi-intellectual workers will still remain considerably unemployable, because a bourgeois national government would not be able to absorb it completely, nor change radically its economic position in the social organism. The fundamental thing is that in every sense of social economics, this class has been proletarianised, and the substitution of one capitalist government by another cannot and will not change their position. Their social prejudices must succumb before they realize that their salvation lies in the frank recognition of their social position, and consciously take their stand where they really belong.

#### **4. The Proletariat—II**

##### **Process of Development**

As the result of the devious working of the same force of capitalist exploitation, the modern urban centres of India which grew as the outposts of capitalist civilisation, were until rather recently conspicuous by the absence of the

inevitable counterpart of capitalism, namely, the proletariat. The proletarianisation of the Indian masses was not intensive, but extensive. The modern industries first introduced into India having been mining and transport, the workers employed in them were not concentrated in cities. The modern urban centres continued to be purely commercial marts till the earlier 80's of the last century, and predominantly so, as late as the beginning of the current one. The great majority of the working class, belonging to the category of wage-earners partially or totally, lived in the rural district. The cities offered very little attraction to the purely manual workers, except to those employed in domestic services and other non-industrial occupations of comparatively little importance. What little remains of the handicrafts that survived the attack of imported machine-made goods, had to do so by retiring within the confines of remote villages. In 1899 the industrial workers, in their partially or totally wage-earning capacity, were distributed as follows: The total number of people living on industrial wages was estimated at a little over 15,000,000, making a population of 33,000,000, with their families and dependents. This included about 6,000,000 women-workers. That is, about 8.5 per cent of the then population of the country was dependent upon industrial wages. Accurate information as to what portion of this class of industrial workers belonged to the city proletariat, is not available. But considering the magnitude of modern machine-industry that existed in those days, the portion cannot be placed higher than 15 per cent. That is the number of workers employed in modern large-scale industries on the eve of twentieth century could not be more than 1,500,000 which, together with their families numbered 3,300,000. At that period, the principal industries of the country were transport (including railways, tram-ways and river steam-navigation), mining (coal, gold, iron, manganese, mica etc.), textile (cotton, wool, silk and jute), electric and gas works, and tea plantations. The number of cities with a population of 50,000

or over was 45. But very few of them could be called modern industrial centres. Only Calcutta with its ship-building yards, railway workshop, gas works, and jute mills; Bombay with its harbour and dock-yards, railway workshops and cotton mills; Ahmedabad with its cotton mills;—Cawnpore with its woollen mills and leather factories; Jabulpur with its railway workshops and government arms factory; Jamalpur with its locomotive workshops; Ranigunj with the surrounding coal fields; Cossipur, Ichapur, Dum-Dum and Kirkee with their government arms and powder factories; Rangoon with its rice mills and harbour; Karachi, Madras and Chittagong with their harbours and dock-yards; and the tea plantations of Assam and Darjeeling could be called modern industrial centres with a proletarian population accumulated there.

The remaining 13,500,000 (that is 29,700,000 including families and dependents) of the population living entirely or partially on industrial wages in 1899-1900 were domiciled in the rural district. These people were occupied in the following trades : weaving and spinning, ceramics, tanning and leather works, carpentry, metal works, sugar manufacture, other food industries, manufacture of chemicals, building industry, manufacture of boats, carts and other means of transport, dress-making and manufacture of toilet articles, etc. The precarious state of these handicraft industries and the uncertain economic condition of the workers engaged in them have been dealt with in the previous part. These artisans, once engaged in prosperous trade in the town, were ruined and dislodged from their hereditary economic position by the introduction of machine made products imported from abroad. The busy towns, once centres of manufacture as well as trade, were divested of their character of centres of production and became exclusively those of distribution and administration. Thus, the urban population engaged in productive work was driven to the villages; but even in the remotest corners of the country the artisan class did not free itself from the competition of the cheap imported goods.

Consequently, what remains of the rural industrial worker today is partially engaged in and dependent upon agriculture, and mostly upon agricultural wages at that.

This dislocation of the social equilibrium has destroyed the economic basis of caste-division. Industrial, professional, and cultural callings of the Indian society were confined within the limits of hereditary caste-divisions. In the eighteenth century caste, in so far as the industrial population was concerned, had taken the character of trade guilds, which were shattered by the higher method of production of industrial England. Nevertheless, till today the innumerable caste-divisions are found existing in the Indian society, and the superficial barriers, separating these castes have not been broken down as yet. But a little enquiry under the surface discloses the fact that the very foundation of the caste system has been undermined. The craft divisions on which the castes were built to all practical purposes have ceased to exist with the ruin of the craft industry. It only remained for the large scale machine-industry to gather the demobilised human forces and build up a new social structure; but this unifying force was very late in coming. Therefore, in spite of their destruction as factors of social-economics, the caste-divisions continued to exist; but they were but the memory of something dead and gone—a social prejudice that cannot be forgot-ten easily unless a violent storm of new institutions based upon higher means of production, knocks the undermined structure to the dust and throws it to the four winds. The Indian worker, released from caste bonds, has not been enslaved to the machine; on the contrary, he has been tied to the soil which his forefather had left long ago. Unlike large-scale industry, agriculture does not kill individualism. Therefore three-fourths of the Indian people, in spite of being engaged in the same industry, agriculture, can keep themselves hedged within various caste-divisions whose economic basis has ceased to exist long ago. The following figures taken from the Census Report of 1911 are interesting: They show that caste, which existed in so far as inter-marriage and eating

together were concerned, did not have any economic-importance. Altogether 89 castes were found to be in existence including a large section of the Muslim population as well. But the actual professional (industrial) divisions functioning were 21. In most of these professional divisions were engaged members of various castes. Let us take some of the most important castes for instance. The number of Brahmins, whose profession according to the caste system is study, teaching and worship, was 14,598,708. Now in the same year, the number of people occupied in professions and callings allowed only to the Brahmins according to caste law was, at the most, 5,695,049. Therefore about nine million Brahmins must have been engaged in non-caste or extra-caste callings.

On the other side, of the 5,695,049 engaged in Brahminic professions, more than 70 per cent belonged to other castes which are debarred from these noble and holy professions by caste regulations. Kshatriyas or Chattris or Rajputs, all taken together, were numbered at 9,430,095. These are military castes. They are to occupy themselves only with national defence. The number of people engaged in works allowed to the military castes was 2,398,586 in the same years. Besides more than 50 per cent of the public forces of India is recruited from the Muslim and other classes outside the Kshatriyas. From this it follows that almost 90 per cent of the military caste were occupied in callings, below or above their caste-limits. The numerical strength of the Baniyas or trading and money-lending caste, was put at 1,125,517. But the actual number of people dependent upon these professions was not less than 17,839,102. And among these could be found Brahmins of venerable parentage and direct descendents of valorous Kshatriyas. There were 11,493,753 Chamars, that is leather and hide workers, one of the lowest and most despised castes. Now the same years found only 698,741 people engaged in this industry. Therefore the rest of these hated, untouchable Chamars must have been accommodated somewhere else in the social organism. Telis or the oil-crushing

caste was 4,233,250. But the number of workers employed in this trade was hardly half a million (exact figure unavailable). By the year 1911 most of the oil consumed in the country was crushed in power-driven mills situated in urban centres employing workers from all castes, not excluding even the Brahmin. All the different sub-castes belonging to the guild of the weaving and spinning industry was calculated at 15,306,041. But the workers employed in the textile factories were not recruited exclusively from the given caste and the actual number of people engaged in handicraft textile industry was less than 8 millions.

This same process of disintegration and economic chaos may be marked in all the castes. A Brahmin can be found sweeping the street or engaged in the kitchen, whereas the son of a washer-woman will be occupying a high administrative post, or the son of the weaver teaching philosophy in the University. In short, capitalism had done its work and done it well, but one-sidedly. The destruction was very nearly complete, but the process of reconstruction was barred from setting in immediately. The working-class of the Indian nation had been expropriated of its means of production. It had ceased to be the owner of its tools, thus losing the power to wield them according to dictates of its own necessity; its productivity had been crushed under the mass-production of machine-industry. The productive elements of the community had been practically reduced to the state of wage-slavery. But it was only the *distribution* of capitalism that had so far been introduced into India. With the absence of mass-productive industrial centres, the masses of Indian workers, in spite of having been expropriated and pauperised, remained scattered in the rural districts. Their productive capacity was subjugated to capitalist exploitation quantitatively. So long as the economic exploitation of the country could be kept a monopoly of imperialist capital, the concentration of the propertyless workers in modern industrial centres did not take place. But at last the native capital began to make itself felt. It refused to remain forever in the fetters



of usury, petty trading, landholding and speculation. It wanted industrial expansion and all the effects of imperialist capital could not prevent it any longer.

With the advent of native capital in the field of modern machinery, began the period of social re-distribution of the people. British capital wanted the Indian worker to forsake his independent craft and dedicate himself exclusively to the production of raw-material for the British industries. To do this work, it was necessary for him to be held in the village, labouring on the soil. But this method of exploitation was not suitable to the interests of the native capitalist class. The latter did not enjoy the advantage of holding the British workers in his factories to produce surplus values for him. The toilers of India engaged in the production of raw material, supplied the British capitalist with labour power which supplemented that of the British proletariat, tied to the machine that manufactured commodities from those raw products. But to the Indian capitalist, the labour power of the Indian worker only in its supplementary capacity, was not enough, because he did not possess big industry to be supplemented by the labour of the land-toiler. So the labour power of a man in the city was more necessary to the Indian capitalist than that of a man in the village. Or in other words, the normal process of the industrial revolution, impeded by a form of exploitation suitable for imperialism, began to assert itself with the rise of Indian industrial capital. British capital accomplished the destructive part of the industrial revolution in India, but prevented the constructive phase of it till, under its own regime, the native bourgeoisie rose to build the modern India on the ruins of the old, whose hollow skeleton had been preserved by the foreign ruler, in conjunction with the native conservatives.

Though the first power-driven factory owned by native capital was built in Bombay in the year 1851, it was not until the 80's of the last century that the real industrialisation of the country began. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a revolution in the movement of the population

became quite marked. Several large cities had come into existence with their industrial centres, where a considerable number of workers were attracted from the villages. Since the industrial revolution in India was obstructed by a foreign agency, and the normal play of social forces was disturbed, the industrial centres of modern India did not grow in the same districts where, in the early days, had flourished the towns inhabited by a rich trading and prosperous artisan class. Thus we find that while traditionally Bengal used to be the centre of India's cotton textile industry in former days, the modern cotton industry developed in another part of the country. And in the place of the cotton-industry around Calcutta, the capital of Bengal, grew the modern factories for pressing, spinning and weaving jute. Modern industrial centres with a proletarian population began to develop since the last decades of the past century. But the native capitalists had to go through a protracted struggle with the foreign ruler before they could build industries to any considerable extent. Therefore, during the thirty years from 1880 to 1910, the growth of modern industrial centres in India was rather slow. The number of toilers living on wages accumulated in urban centres still remained very small. Nevertheless, considerable numbers of workers had been concentrated in the factory towns of Bombay and Bengal even in the closing years of the last century. Most of these workers were unskilled, fresh from the village to which they were still bound by family ties or the fascination of a miserable piece of land, heavily encumbered with debt. The city-worker of modern India did not come out of the ranks of expropriated artisans; he came mostly from the peasantry. After having lost his trade, the artisan was pushed back to the land, where he had come to stay two or three generations before the call of modern industry brought him again to the city. The normal course of industrial development was obstructed in India. Industry did not grow through the successive phases of handicraft, manufacture, small factory, mechanofacture, and then mass production. So the Indian worker has not been trained in industry. He lacks

the proletarian tradition. The presence of a vast number of pauperised population in the country makes the economic condition of the industrial worker of the city very uncertain. Not having had the traditional industrial training, the factory-worker of India is generally unskilled. All these factors taken together make the comparatively new industrial proletariat of india a loosely-knit mass of wage-slaves thrown suddenly into new environments, which are more pressing, more nauseating, more unbearable than their village homes, where they toiled and starved and which they have abandoned in quest of a more comfortable one but recently.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, and specially during the last half dozen years, there has been a steady influx of workers from the village to the city. This movement of population is due to the growth of modern industries. The population of old industrial cities has swelled, and other urban districts have been industrialised. The working population of these industrial centres is mostly drawn from the ranks of the poor peasantry and agricultural proletariat. The growth of the new industrial cities having been rather sudden, the housing conditions of the workers is indescribably horrible. The cost of living is much higher in the towns than in the village. The needs, however modest, of a townsman are again more than those of a villager. Thus, after coming to the city in quest of a more comfortable life, the worker becomes disillusioned. Discontent follows disillusionment. In the village he did not feel the exploitation as keenly as he does in his new environment. The struggle for life is harder and more acute in the city. Here he misses the carefreeness of rural life; and the mutual sympathy that characterises the sufferers in the isolated villages is smothered in the bustle of a commercial city. But the activity of an urban environment infuses new energy in the worker, who but a short time ago was a patient toiler on the land, accepting his hard lot as ordained by providence. This traditional passivity receives a jolt in the city. The glaring inequalities of wealth and comfort, in contradistinction with the merciless

intensity of exploitation of man by man disturbs his mental calm. The spirit of resignation, instilled in him by the teaching of religion during the ages, begins to be ruffled. He can no longer help doubting whether everything is for good, as he has been taught to believe.

Of course on the other hand, the first disillusionment in the city arouses in the worker the desire to go back to his village home. But it is not always so easy to do a thing as to want it. Often he lacks the wherewithal to pay his passage back to the far-off village. Then he actually does receive more cash money than he could ever get or hope to get in the village. The scandalously low wages of a factory worker are handsome in comparison with the dole received by an agricultural worker. And the poor peasant has never enjoyed the blessed sensation of slipping in his pocket a handful of coins, even if they may be of copper, without the apprehension that one or another of his innumerable creditors would be presently coming to take them away from him. In the town he earns his wages, however small, and spends them as he likes. This is not a mean temptation to resist. To return to the village, allured by the fresh air, would be at the cost of the newly-earned freedom of naked wage-slavery, which is to a human being more exhilarating than the drudgery of village life. Indeed there are cases of returning to the old home. But these are rare, and only those few who happen to have their families still in the villages, go back. In cases of long-protracted strikes also, a number of the strikers go back to the villages, because it is impossible for them to live in the city without work. The strikes being spontaneous and the trade-unions being new, the workers are also utterly without any income during the strikes. The wages are so low that the worker begins to starve in the second week of unemployment. Therefore, after having starved as long as he can, the worker naturally feels inclined towards returning to the village where he can get a morsel from either the parents, or relations, or somebody else. But this tendency is on the decline as the result of the growth of unionism

Practical experience also tends to discourage the workers from returning to the village once they are in the city. Very few leave the village home on their own choosing; they are driven out by the economic pressure. On his return to the village having been in the city for some time, the worker finds the place left by him occupied by somebody else. The town life has awakened new visions and new desires in him, which cannot be satisfied in the hackneyed village life. In the city, the last remnants of the caste bonds have been shaken off him, so on returning to the village he finds himself an outcaste. The recent exodus of the Assam tea plantation workers under the instigation of the Non-co-operation agitators ended in disaster. Thousands of workers returned to their villages after years of absence, to find that there was no room for them there. The land they used to till had been occupied and leased to some others by the money-lender; the life in the plantations had completely freed them from those hollow caste prejudices that still hold good in the villages; and if they were under-paid and illtreated in the plantations, starvation and destitution greeted them on their return to the villages.

The Secretary of the Railway, Mining and Papermill Worker's Union, who accompanied a batch of repatriated plantation workers to their villages makes the following statement:

"I found that the repatriation of the coolies had practically resulted in sending them to death. Most of the returning emigrants had no home, no lands. Many of them had been born in the tea gardens and did not even know the name of their villages. At least 60 per cent of the returning emigrants have no distinct caste, having inter-married with the Chamars (the lowest caste). The village people absolutely refused to have anything to do with them, and even denied entrance into the village to men who actually had houses still standing. The villagers themselves find it difficult to keep themselves from starvation, and therefore, feeding the returned coolies is an

impossibility. In the village there are no industries in which these men might be employed, nor any kind of work can be found for the day labourers. It is futile to bring away the coolies from the gardens and send them to the villages, from which 50 to 60 men are leaving daily for the tea-gardens, owing to the famine condition prevailing there. Strikes never succeed if the strikers leave, as their places are easily taken by others''.

It is true on account of their youth and the comparative weakness of capitalist organisation, many factories in the new industrial centres of India work rather spasmodically. They do not offer steady employment to a given number of hands all round the year. Consequently, the workers in such factories are still in a state of semi-proletarianisation, because a part of the year they have to go back to the villages, the city failing to employ them. But development of capitalist organisation and the improvement of industrial production are rapidly changing the situation. The causes for the fluctuation in the urban working-class are being speedily removed. The modern towns of India are bound to grow at the cost of the villages. Primitive agriculture no longer suits the scheme of capitalist exploitation, neither of the imperialist nor of the native bourgeoisie. The Indian worker must produce more; and he cannot do so with the plough-share. Indian labour-power must be supplemented by machine-power. So the economic life of India, which more than a century and a half ago was pushed back to the village from the town of the trader and guildsman, is being shifted to the city of the capitalist and industrial proletariat. The urbanisation of Indian labour began 40 years ago. In the earlier days, the process went on rather slowly owing to the hostility of the imperialist capital; but during the last ten years all bonds have been broken, and many large industrial cities have come into existence accumulating large masses of proletariat. It is several years since the latter has ceased to be the docile Indian toilers of tradition. New material conditions have

aroused new energy, new aspiration new spirit in them. The will to resist has taken the place of resignation. In short, the worker of the industrial cities of modern India is a powerful social factor. He may not be fully conscious of his vital position as yet; he may be still unable to wield his power in the right way; he may still, occasionally, fall victim to the lingering religious and social prejudices, but he can no longer be ignored. Any social or political movement that fails to count on him runs a great danger, because he stands at the vanguard of the forces on which the economic life of the nation depends, and this vanguard will soon become conscious of the historic role it is destined to play.

## **5. The Proletariat—III**

### **Present Condition and Future**

The number of industrial wage-earners in 1911 was 17,515,230 making a total population of 35,323,041 with their families and dependents as against about 15,000,000 (33,000,000, with families) in 1899. While we take into consideration the fact that during the intervening period the rural craft industries dwindled, it becomes apparent that the number of workers employed in modern industries must have increased proportionately, since the total number of industrial wage earners showed a rise. This number did not include the workers employed in transport and domestic services. The number engaged in these two were 2,394,800 and 2,725,856 respectively, making a total population of 10,628,058 including families and dependents. About 15 per cent of the entire body of industrial wage-earners was employed in modern machine-industries. But a large portion of those engaged in handicrafts were also drawn to the towns, since their industries depended on the urban population or export trade. For example, the majority of the building workers lived in the towns; so also was the case with the carpenters and furniture workers, dress and toilet makers.

Thus while on one hand, the artisan class of the old towns was ruined economically and was absorbed in the ranks of the pauperised peasantry or land-workers after having been driven out of their urban homes, on the other hand, a new class of industrial wage earners employed in craft industry, was coming into existence in the modern cities. This new class of handicraft workers rested on a different social basis. They were not independent artisans owning their tools, but wage slaves; in their respective trade and profession they were not bound by the caste laws; and as an economic factor, they formed a part of the modern capitalist system. They were accumulated in cities owing to the growth of the latter. During the first decade of the present century the building industry in the towns had increased two-fold and the furniture industry had grown ten times. This was due to the migration of the rural population to the cities, thus creating need for more housing accommodation. With the exception of hand-weaving and spinning, employing about 3,500,000 workers, all other craft industries of any importance, are in the towns.

The forcible penetration of foreign capital destroyed the equilibrium in the old system on national economy. It pushed the productive forces backwards; by preventing the growth of machine industry it drove the semi-proletarianised craftsmen back to agriculture. But, as the inevitable consequence of capitalist exploitation, towns had to grow; and the new towns created their new industrial workers. At first these industrial workers were employed in small factories run more or less on handicraft basis; but small scale production could not prosper in a society reduced to the exploitation of the industrial capital. Therefore, thanks to the rise of the modern bourgeoisie and its entrance into the industrial field, all the industrial wage-earners of the modern towns are being concentrated in large factories. This social re-adjustment has been greatly helped by the unexpected economic and industrial situation created by the war, which gave the Indian bourgeoisie the opportunity to increase the dimensions of the native capitalist industry. The rapidity with which the Indian bourgeoisie



developed in the last ten years has been shown in the first chapter. In consequence of this sudden industrial development, the growth of large cities has been accentuated proportionately. For instance the pressure of population has been so enormous in Calcutta that the price of land went up 350 per cent, during the last six years; and house rent has increased by 200 per cent.

The classified report of the census of 1920 is not yet available; but it is shown by other sources of information that the number of industrial workers employed in large capitalist concerns is more than 9,000,000 at the present time, as against a little over 3,000,000 before the war. It is estimated that 4.5 per cent of the total population is to-day employed in the three principal industries namely, transport, textile and mining. That is, the number of workers in these industries is 14,400,000. The portion of these particular industries still left to handicraft is not considerable. Therefore, the total number of proletariat can be reasonably put further above the estimated figure of 9,000,000. In any case, compared with the vastness of the total population, the numerical strength of the proletariat cannot be called very great. But what should be remarked is not the actual number existing at the present moment, but the process of growth of the proletarian class. The primal industry of the country, viz., agriculture, has been overburdened for a long time; the number of people depending on wages derived from this industry is too large to be borne by it under any condition; there are in the country tens of millions of people without any means of livelihood worth the name. Therefore it is but natural that a heavy migration from the village to the town will immediately follow the growth of modern large scale industry offering employment. This redistribution of the population will inevitably bring in with it new orientation in the political life of the nation.

Imperialism reduced the toilers of the country to the economic state of wage-slavery, but by denying the native capital the opportunity of exploiting the workers with the aid of

modern means of production, the class differentiation of the society was kept rather confused. The rise of a national bourgeoisie, followed by the increasing exploitation of the workers by native capital, has broken the social stagnation. Proletarianisation of the Indian worker has begun, and the Indian society cannot be spared the inevitable consequences. It will be shown presently that these consequences have begun to make themselves felt since several years ago.

The following list gives the principal industries with the approximate number of workers employed: cotton and jute-textile (machine-driven) 1,300,000; transport (including railways and river steam navigation) 1,200,000; mining, 800,000; plantations, 900,000; engineering and metal works, 150,000; rice, flour, oil, paper and saw mills, 15,000; cotton ginning and jute bailing, 100,000; printing press, 150,000; dockyard and shipbuilding, 200,000; marine transport, 300,000; building, 1,900,000; tanneries and leather works, 50,000; sugar, 120,000; arms and ammunition factories, 100,000; tobacco factories, 38,000; petroleum refineries, 40,000; gas and electric works, 50,000. Other industries employing a smaller number of workers, are rubber works, tinning and packing, pottery, cutlery, chemical, pencil, sheet-metal, sporting goods etc. Then, there are about a million furniture workers living in towns, engaged in capitalist factories. The number of workers employed in urban-mechanical factories can, thus, be estimated at 7,000,000. To these should be added the masses of non-industrial workers accumulated in the large cities, whose number can also be counted in millions. The urban non-industrial workers include domestic servants, carriage drivers, street sweepers, other municipal employees, porters, carriers, etc. These unskilled workers are also employed *en masse* and live on the outskirts of the towns in conditions absolutely revolting. Then, we have already seen the economic condition of the petty intellectual wage-earner. In short, the large commercial cities are populated mostly by propertyless wage-slaves of different categories, but belonging to the same social class.

Since the modern machine industry of India has not been built gradually on the background of craft industries, the proletariat, until recently was a mass of unskilled labourers. Machine industry, built in India with English capital, usually employed skilled workers imported from the home country. The absence of Indian workers grown up in machine-environment with a mechanical training, obliged the British capitalist to import skilled workers from England even if he had to pay comparatively high wages to these workers. Gradually the latter proved to be a rather useful member of the exploiting class. Working men, wage-slaves themselves, these imported skilled labourers ceased to feel themselves workers as soon as they landed in India, readily getting absorbed into the class of colonial over-lords. Thus the working class employed in Indian industries remained divided into two sections, far removed from each other. The first of which, that is the British labour aristocrats, rendered the capitalist great help in exploiting the more numerous second, that is the native unskilled workers. The latter continued to be so miserably under-paid that the employer could well afford to pay handsome salaries to the former in recompense for the valuable colonial services rendered by them. Being unskilled and extremely exploited, the Indian industrial workers were not always steady in their urban occupations. The permanent pressure of a huge unemployed mass always made the economic position of the unskilled industrial labourer very insecure. They never became vital to the industry, which could at any emergency throw them out in favour of new recruits from the unemployed reserve force. Thus it happened that till 15 years ago, when the first big strike of the railway workers took place, the wages of the industrial workers stayed stationary. In the early years of the twentieth century, the average wages of the urban worker was half a pound a month. Since then, the rise in the wage scale has not been more than 100 per cent whereas the cost of living has gone up 300 per cent only in course of the last four years.

The economic condition of the Indian industrial worker is horrible. He is much worse off than the workers of any other civilized country. It is dangerous to draw parallels in history; but it could be said that the social readjustment felt in Europe, and especially in England, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, has at last come to India. The effect of this readjustment is a certain concentration of workers in the new industrial centres. And this concentration of labour forces in rapidly growing factories has brought in its train untold sufferings. The living condition of the Indian factory worker is intolerable. The sudden concentration of population in the cities has made the housing problem very acute. In most of the large industrial towns no accommodation at all is available for the working people who, therefore, have to dwell in the surrounding villages, often 6 or 8 miles away from where they have to work. The working day is of 12 hours which has only lately been reduced to 11 and in some cases 10. Thus in order to present themselves at the factory at six, when the work starts, the labourers have to start from their dwelling quarters as early as four in the morning. Then again in the evening, utterly exhausted by the long day's hard labour, with what can just as well be called an empty stomach, the worker has to walk the distance back home after leaving the factory at six. Owing to the lack of cheap suburban transportation, it is necessary to walk this distance twice a day; and even had there been any, his scanty earning would not permit the worker to pay the fare.

As to the conditions of the urban workingmen's quarters, when there are any, the following description is taken from the report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18). We take the cases of the two most important and typical industrial cities, namely Calcutta and Bombay. The living condition of the jute mill operatives in the suburbs of Calcutta is pictured as follows:

"We have little doubt that the long hours passed in the uncongenial, if not unhealthy, surrounding of a factory, from which the labourer returns at night to a dirty, crowded and

insanitary hovel, where his only relaxation is found in the liquor shop and the bazaar, are most unattractive to a man accustomed to rural life, and it is only the congestion existing in his native district and the desire to earn higher wages that lead him to submit to such conditions."

The slums of Bombay are described by the Industrial Commission as follows:

"The worse type of chawls (tenements) consists of a two, three, or four-storied building, with single-room units either placed back to back or separated by a narrow gully (alley) two or three feet wide, usually traversed by an *open air drain*. The rooms, especially those on the ground floor, are often pitch dark and possess little in the way of windows. The ground floor is usually damp, owing to an insufficient plinth; the courtyards between the buildings are most undesirably narrow and, therefore, receive insufficient sun and air. They are very dirty. Water arrangements are very insufficient and latrine accommodation bad. A most insatiable smell hangs round these buildings. The rents vary according to the value of the ground. The monthly rent per room is from 3 rupees to 7 rupees, and the rooms themselves are usually 10 feet square. The standard of comfort is so low that the overcrowding entailed by taking in boarders or lodgers is readily tolerated for the sake of contribution to the rent received from them."

The Commission testifies to having seen families occupying the same room, and single lodgers living in the same rooms occupied by one or more families. In the city of Bombay and its immediate surroundings, three-fourths of a million people are living in one-roomed dwellings, described above. Among the urban population of factory workers, the death rate is 60 per 1000, and the infant mortality is 650 per thousand births.

It is but very recently that the British government has changed its economic policy of obstructing the growth of modern industrialism in India. In order to handicap the working of the new cotton-factories and to render their

products unable to compete with the imported goods, the India Factories Act to 'protect the labouring class' was passed as early as 1881. It happened that the interests of the rising native bourgeoisie and the government were not identical in India in those days. In the early '80s it was not a very rare instance when a worker worked 18 hours a day in the cotton mills. This inhuman practice was not much affected by the government measure; because the officials, who were to enforce the factory regulations, could be easily bought. And the tragedy of the whole situation was that, as in all government departments, these petty native officials helped the rich capitalist to abuse and infringe the laws to protect the poor labourer. The Factory Act of 1881 fixed the maximum working day at 15 hours; but even this did not satisfy the thirst of the employers. The original Act was again amended in 1891 making it more stringent; but with no avail. The brutal exploitation went on until the workers rebelled. In the later '90s a number of strikes took place in the cotton factories of Bombay and Ahmedabad as well as in the jute mills of Calcutta. The situation remained practically unchanged till 1906 when the boycott of foreign goods, declared by the Indian National Congress, gave the first great impetus to the indigenous machine industry. This impetus was felt very largely in the cotton industry. Mills after mills were erected and the old ones extended. The number of urban workers was suddenly increased. In order to break-down the boycott movement, the banks handling the import of Lancashire cotton fabrics, kept on under-selling this commodity during the years of 1906, 1907, 1908. The only available weapon, with which the Indian manufacturers could fight this economic battle, was the cheap and unorganized labour. They made such an inhumanly excessive use of this weapon that the situation became scandalous, and in 1908 the government, which thrives on the exploitation of the Indian masses appointed a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the condition of factory labour and recommended means of improving it. In its reports published in 1911, the Commission says : "The hours of labour are excessive, begin from 14 to 22 per day. Sanitary

provision is gravely defective in most factories." One witness, of practical experience, stated : "Any man would feel exhausted even if he merely sat in a chair in some of the work rooms for eight or ten hours, the atmosphere was so foul."

On the recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry the Indian Factories Act was amended in 1911. The new legislation established a maximum 13 hours day for men, 11 hours for women and children, with a thirty minute break for a meal in the middle of the day. But in practice very little improvement was made in the life of the factory worker by the new legislation. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the Indian workers was unskilled and that, owing to the existence of a hungry mass of unemployed, it was long before they could begin to organize themselves, made them helpless victims of the employing class. The abuse of child labour was particularly brutal. In short, the harrowing scenes that followed the Industrial Revolution in England were repeated in India, in spite of her much-vaunted spiritual civilization. And the extortion of labour was the most scandalous and disgraceful in the cotton factories of Bombay, owned mostly by native capital.

Indian factory production was originally modelled on the English system which gives a privileged position to the skilled workers. With the rapid development of capitalism, the American method of standardized mass-production is, however, gaining preference of late. Until a few years ago, the Indian factory workers were divided into the widely separated classes of skilled and unskilled. There were very few Indians in the first class, which was almost exclusively reserved for 'imported' English mechanics and engineers. The monopoly was quite complete in the railways and other industries owned by the state or foreign capitalists. In the textile industries, the skilled weavers were mostly native. But all responsible positions, and especially those belonging to the mechanical branch, were held by Europeans who, on account of the disproportionately high wages and treatment they received could by no means be recognized as members of the proletarian class. But the Indian skilled workers did not enjoy such a privileged

position, either in wages or in treatment. The only advantage they had over their unskilled colleagues was that their employment was not so unsteady as that of the latter, because it was not so easy to find skilled weavers, carpenters, moulders, designers etc., to replace the ones under employment. The native craftsmen, in spite of their knowledge of the trade, could not readily handle the mechanical tools; and to employ European workers would increase the cost of production enormously. Thus, while in the earlier years of the twentieth century, the unskilled urban workers were still but a mass of fluctuating wage-earners not altogether divorced from their village bonds, there had come into existence, nevertheless, a class of skilled workers domiciled permanently in the city and dependent exclusively on industrial wages.

In 1910 the numerical strength of this class of pure proletariat was about 1,000,000, that is nearly 50 per cent of the total number of urban factory labourers of that time. The European element in this skilled labouring class numbered 15,000 employed in factories and 80,000 employed on the railways—traffic and workshops included. The number of European skilled factory workers has increased since then; last year in the cotton mills of the province of Bombay alone 23,000 of them were employed. But, on the other hand, the English monopoly over the field of skilled mechanical work in the transport and other industries owned by the government and British companies, has been broken. The number of Indians employed in these branches has increased considerably. This change was forced by war conditions. The import of skilled workers from England had to be stopped, and Indian industries, extended and placed on a war basis for the production of military supplies, needed an additional number of skilled workers. Thus, native workers had to be admitted into the heavens of expert mechanical positions, so far reserved for the workers belonging to the ruling nationality. This process brought the Indian closer to the machine, and therefore, proportionately farther from the village life and traditions. Consequently, the number of industrial wage-earners domiciled



in the towns, divorced from all connection with the village, increased.

Before the war, the textile industry, owned mostly by native capital, had to import foreign mechanical and engineering workers from abroad along with foreign machines. The obstructed growth of machine industry had prevented the rise of a class of expert mechanics among the Indian proletariat. This obligation to employ highly paid English mechanics constituted a heavy burden on the industry. But in spite of their desire to get rid of this burden, the native capitalists went on employing the imported experts in order to maintain the efficiency of the factories. The war conditions told on this practice also; and the mechanical jobs in the textile industries were opened to the native workers.

It is generally held that Indian labour in machine industries falls short of the required standard of efficiency. Evidence is not lacking to prove that, in spite of the miserably low scale of wages, Indian labour can produce as cheaply as the Western workers. The comparatively inferior stage of organization, in which the Indian capitalist industry found itself until recently and the unspeakably bad living conditions together with the artificially forced low standard of comfort of the Indian workers, are the causes of the small productivity of Indian labour in spite of the low wages. The Industrial Commission (1916-18) arrived at the following conclusion on the subject :

“It is true that the inferior physique and *tropical* conditions contribute to this state of affairs (low rate of production), but there is great reason to believe that the former is to some extent the result of preventible disease, whilst other causes, which are even more obviously remediable, are factors that unnecessarily increase the difficulties of our labour problem.”

Major White, of the Indian Medical Service, said : “A large part of the relative inefficiency of Indian labour is due to removable pathological causes.” Indian employers, lacking a long experience in driving large herds of wage-slaves, still

believe in the antiquated theory and practice of paying the least possible wages. But the wrong economics of this practice is beginning to dawn upon them. The steady and uninterrupted growth of industry requires a settled class of urban workers; and the prevailing intolerable condition in which the factory labourer has to live in the towns, is not very conducive to make him forget the village, with which he still maintains a close connection. Of course it is no longer practically possible for the entire body of urban workers to go back to the village, thus leaving the modern industrial centres utterly deserted. But what actually happens is a constant fluctuation in the working population—the movement back and forth between the village and the town. This in itself is very prejudicial to the productivity of the industry. So, of late there has arisen a movement, backed by the new economic policy of the government, to increase the housing capacity of the large industrial centres, in order that the working people can be accommodated near the factories. These housing facilities have been good for completing the proletarianisation of the city workers, because large numbers are settled in the towns once for all. But the condition in which they find themselves in their new environment, is horrible. Driven from their holding on the soil, separated once for all from the village life and traditions, and rudely disillusioned in their pilgrimage to the shrine of urban industry in quest of higher wages, the Indian proletariat is bound to develop the psychology of its class, and it is doing so amazingly fast.

The relation which the Indian city worker maintained with the village until recently and still maintains to a certain extent, though to a diminishing degree, has its effects on the rural wage earners. The discontent aroused in him by the sight of glaring inequalities between the poor and the rich in the cities, is carried with him to the village and contributes to disturbing the resignation of the rural toiler. Coming to the cities, the worker finds out that he has been living a life not of a human being, but an animal; he sees how many things of necessity and comfort have been denied to him; his desire

to live and enjoy is aroused; he becomes indignant at having been deprived of many things that are within the reach of the people living in the towns. He goes back to the village, but his new spirit does not die in him. On the contrary, it contaminates the inarticulate masses in the rural districts, and arouses in them the desire to go themselves to the cities. The result is an increased migration from the village to the town. Even those who come back from the cities, return thither with new comrades. Thus is growing a new social force motivated by the changed economic condition of a large section of the people. The economic basis of the country has been changed; the corresponding redistribution of the population is inevitable. The social equilibrium has been disturbed. A process of readjustment must follow. With all their traditional resignation and apathy, the wage-earners cannot any longer stay and starve in the villages. The small-scale, backward agriculture cannot provide them with employment. The attractions of city life are felt in the remotest corner of the country. The wage-slaves must flock thither. And the concentration of a numerous social class doomed to the same misery will inevitably give rise to a situation impregnated with revolutionary possibilities. The signs are already very manifest. The revolt of the wage-slave against the propertied rich is rocking the country. The nationalist pre-occupation can no longer calm it down. Side by side with the national struggle, which is assuming alarming proportions, the class-struggle is also developing. The modern bourgeoisie, which is leading the national struggle, could not have come into existence and power without bringing in its train the other side of the social picture, namely the proletariat, which in its turn must initiate and lead the struggle for the emancipation of the exploited class. The class-struggle is raging in India simultaneously with the struggle for national liberation.

Whether nationalist pre-occupations—the historic necessity for political independence of the Indian people—will be sufficient for keeping the class-struggle in the background

indefinitely, is to be judged by the actual class differentiation in the present social organism and by the possibility of this differentiation growing wider. A comparative study of the economic condition of the different classes of the society is helpful for making this judgement. Since the entire Indian people is under the exploitation of a foreign imperialism, it is true that until about half a century ago, no social class had any considerably great wealth accumulated in its hands. On the contrary, in the early days of the British rule, the riches of the upper class were exploited and taken out of the country. For more than a century the propertied class was not allowed the freedom of investing their wealth in profitable means of exploitation. Generally speaking, this brought down the economic condition of the entire nation approximately to the same level. National exploitation was naturally followed by national pauperisation. But this abnormal economic equilibrium could not be maintained for ever. In course of time it was disturbed, and class-exploitation within the structure of the exploited nation became a social phenomenon. The rise of the modern bourgeoisie in India has been traced in the first chapter; the pauperisation and destitution of the peasantry has been shown in the second; now we will see that in recent years the enrichment of the capitalist class has caused impoverishment of the proletariat.

Let us take one industry, namely the textile, in which by far the largest amount of Indian capital is invested and which employs a considerable part of the city proletariat. In spite of the fact that this industry was not very small in that period, the companies owning cotton mills in the last decade of the past century could not pay more than 6 per cent to 7 per cent dividend; in 1907-1908, in spite of the prosperity resulting from the boycott movement of 1906, the rate of dividend did not rise any further than 15 per cent. But in recent years, the profit made in the same industry has been increasing enormously. According to the Bombay Stock Exchange List of 1919, the dividend paid by the cotton-mills exceeded 25

per cent. There were at least three mills paying 40 per cent, two paying 50 per cent. and four others paid 56 per cent, 70 per cent 100 per cent. and 120 per cent respectively. Considering the fact that the capital invested as well as the total productivity of the textile industry have increased tremendously since 1919, it is to be deduced that the rate and amount of profit must have gone up in proportion. In 1918 the companies possessing jute mills paid to the shareholders an average of 20 per cent, or double the rate of the previous year. The profit from the jute mills has increased very much since then. (For the increased rate of profit in Indian industries vide section—Page 443).

A look at the other side of the picture makes the class cleavage of Indian society quite manifest. According to the evidence recorded by the Industrial Commission, the wages of the Bombay cotton mill operatives in 1918, ranged from 15 shillings and 10 pence to £3 2s 7d per month. The wages in the Calcutta jute mills were from 12 shillings to £2, and the average wages of the workers in the Bengal coal fields was 19 shillings per month. In the same year (1918), the cost of living had gone up 200 per cent. The price of foodgrains was 175 per cent wholesale and 400 per cent retail more than in the pre-war period. But the wages had hardly improved, the average rate of increase having been not more than 25 per cent. This unbearable economic burden exhausted the patience of the workers, and the result was the food-riots and the strike-movement which during the last three years affected every class of workers including those toiling on the land. By its three years' struggle for economic betterment—a struggle much abused, dissipated and misled by the bourgeois nationalists—the Indian proletariat has succeeded in securing an average 50 per cent increase in the wages, while the profit of the capitalist during the same period has grown much more, in proportion as well as in total amount.

The rise in the scale of average wages per month in the cotton industry is as follows :

<i>Year</i>	1895	1914	1918	1920
<i>Wages</i>	Rs. 14.5	18.5	21	24

The lowest scale of wages for unskilled labour was 7 rupees in 1915 and 8 rupees in 1920 and the highest for the expert weaver was 36 rupees and 40 rupees respectively. The scale of wages in the same industry in another province, viz. Madras was as follows :

<i>Year</i>	1895	1914	1918	1920
<i>Wages</i>	Rs. 9.5	17	21	25.5

The wages in the jute industry of Bengal showed the following scale of increase :

<i>Year</i>	1895	1914	1918	1920
<i>Wages</i>	11.8	16.5	17	23.5

The increase in the wages of the workers employed in the engineering industry has been as follows over the unit of 1880:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Skilled</i>	<i>Unskilled</i>
1914	11%	7%
1918	13%	7.5%
1920	15%	9%

The railway wages rose in the following scale. The rate of 1880 is taken for the unit:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Skilled</i>	<i>Unskilled</i>
1914	18%	5.7%
1918	20%	7.5%
1920	25.33%	9%

The average scale in several other principal industries taken together showed the following rate of increase :

<i>Year</i>	1895	1914	1918	1920
<i>Wages</i>	Rs. 9	18.3	19	25

From the above abstract figures it is evident that in all the industries, the percentage of increase in the wages has been more during the last period, that is, between 1918 and 1920. Remembering the fact that it was during this period of two years that the strike movement among the Indian proletariat became very strong and widespread, it is concluded

that this meagre improvement in their economic condition was secured by the efforts of the workers themselves. Therefore it is natural that the Indian proletariat, however ignorant, however undeveloped they may be still, could not help learning from the experience of the last three years that they must fight to earn the right to live as human beings. They have also found out that in this struggle, they have to face the opposition of the native as well as the foreign employer, and that in case of emergency, the two do not hesitate to join forces in spite of the national struggle that makes them enemies otherwise.

The wages and living conditions of the working class vary so much from one part of the country to the other that one cannot get a clear idea about the situation from the average wage-scale in the principal industries. In fact, the actual income of nearly 80 per cent of the workers falls considerably below the average quoted above. For example, the daily earning of a miner in the coal fields of Bengal is seven annas, which is equivalent to 8 pence. With this he can hardly buy his food, not to take into account his family, housing and other primary necessities. The wages in the plantations are still worse, the average being as follows:

	1914	1919
Men	Rs. 6.2	Rs. 6.35
Women	Rs. 4.68	Rs. 5.15
Children	Rs. 2.9	Rs. 3.15

The average wages of an unskilled urban labourer is 9 rupees per month. This buys him not more than 90 pounds of food grains at the prevailing price. In order to have at least one full meal a day for himself and for his family, which averages two or three persons with very little earning capacity, he needs not less than 120 pounds of foodgrains alone. Then there are other expenses which he must meet.

Such are the conditions under which the workers in the Indian cities live and labour. The cash payment they receive in the towns is indeed more than they used to get in the villages and more than the unskilled rural labourer still gets.

Therefore, in spite of the wretchedness of the city life and the practically lower economic value of the wages earned there, urban employment offers a lure to the village toiler who wants to run away from the never-to-be-broken bonds of indebtedness and the hopeless drudgery of primitive rural life. Once in this city, his life is not by any means bettered; but the division of the society between the rich few and the poor many becomes manifest to him. In the village everybody seemed to be poor; everybody lived approximately the same kind of life; the sight of somebody benefiting by the labour or others is more vivid in the city than in the village. These factors act quickly on the psychology of the workers herded around the factories in horrible conditions. Thus, notwithstanding their still existing ties with the village, their ignorance, lingering religious prejudices and the traditional spirit of resignation—the most baneful product of the much-vaunted Indian culture—the proletariat is forced to develop the fighting qualities. The Indian worker has declared the class war, apparently unconscious of what he is engaged in. Under the regime of capitalist exploitation, Indian society stood divided into two classes since long ago. The cleavage has been growing wider and wider with the development of the native bourgeoisie. But the rise of modern industrial centres with their army of wage-slaves has brought the situation to a point where the cold facts have to be faced. They can no longer be softened nor clouded by nationalist preoccupations.

That the unbearable economics conditions are making the patient Indian workers learn the necessity of fighting for their interest, and that this awakening of the labouring masses is no longer unnoticed by the upper classes of the society is shown by the discussion of the 'Labour Problem' which is capturing the attention of the press as well as the platform. We quote below extracts from a typical article on the subject published in *The Hindu* of Madras, a nationalist journal of the conservative school. The article was titled "The Labour Crisis : A Gloomy Outlook".



“The labour crisis in Madras is but the forerunner of what is in store for us in the future. I have observed with keen interest the first symptoms of the awakening intelligence throughout the country. In one word it is showing itself in the form of restlessness. The silent suffering and the stolid contentment of the poor and labouring classes have given way to a vehement desire to share the comforts of life with the well-to-do classes above them, the members of which are setting a bad example to the lower classes....The wheel of fortune in the villages has turned; the ancient simplicity of the village life has disappeared. The labouring classes have learned by silent suffering, helped by the instinct for self-preservation, to outwit their tyrants and masters by using the very same methods they have so long been practising to filch them out of their honest dues”.

The writer goes on describing at length the revolutionary changes that are taking place in the rural life; how the old caste divisions are breaking down and the society is getting divided into two classes, viz. rich and poor; and how the latter are losing their traditional virtues and becoming turbulent. He remarks : “They (workers) suffer and cherish a strong dislike to the class which has compassed their ruin through quarrels and litigations, which are the village edition of the imperial ‘divide and rule policy’.”

So much for the pious alarm of the respectable bourgeoisie which is shocked at the impudence of the lowly. But the real strength and character of the awakening of the Indian working class, urban as well as rural, are indicated by the strike movement of the last several years. The rebelliousness of the workers has added great potentiality to the struggle for national freedom. In the din of political fights, the economic struggle of the working class has been drowned; economic strikes have been invariably transformed into premature political ones; but to an observer with an understanding of the social forces, this complexity of affairs cannot confuse the great outstanding motive behind it all. The working-class, and particularly the city proletariat, has begun to fight for its economic betterment,

and signs are not lacking that before very long, the conscious desire for social emancipation will not remain beyond its mental outlook.

Eversince the class of city workers existed in India, the strike has not been an altogether unknown affair. But so long as the numerical strength of this class remained insignificant and the large majority of the workers were unskilled, strikes were very few and far between. Indian workers employed in modern industries were mostly unskilled until 10 or 12 years ago, and the permanent presence of a huge army of unemployed in the country constituted a standing menace to the steadiness of the factory workers' job. Under such circumstances, the only consequence of a strike would be the summary dismissal of the strikers, who could be replaced by new men at a moment's notice and at even lower wages. Thus, although there occurred strikes of the cotton-mill operatives of Bombay in the later years of the '90s, of the railway-workers in 1906, of the coal miners around the same year, of the Calcutta jute-mill workers in 1907 etc., the economic struggle of the working class did not take sufficiently organised and powerful form till 1917. In this year, the war conditions had on the one hand given a tremendous impetus to the machine industry in India, while on the other hand, they had pushed the cost of living several times higher. The number of workers accumulated and settled in the industrial centres had greatly increased; the proportion of skilled workmen among the Indian labourers had also increased. Owing to the sudden growth of industries, the towns were horribly congested and the housing condition was scandalous. The wages were so low that the workers could hardly buy anything with them. Such a situation could not help creating discontent, which was first expressed in the form of food-riots. Shops were looted by hungry work-people. The food-riots were quelled with the aid of armed forces.

Unable to drag along any longer in their unbearable existence—unorganised, practically leaderless—the workers of the textile industry found the first weapon of the class-war. They

instinctively learned to strike. The first strikes were declared in the latter part of 1917, and within the course of but a few months, not less than 120,000 workers took part in the same strike, tying up simultaneously a number of factories in several towns. The demand was for higher wages and shorter hours, which were granted to a certain extent. Since then strikes followed upon strikes, and the year 1918 found the entire country seething with labour unrest. Out of the strike movement were born labour organizations. Trade unions were organised by the workers in various industries. The class-war became more naked. Even when forced to concede to the strike-demands, the capitalists refused to recognise the unions as legitimate bodies. The government endorsed the attitude of the employers, many of whom were Indians and not a few belonging to the nationalist movement. Recognition of the right of collective bargaining was included in the strike demands. By the middle of 1918, 'participation in the control of industry' was included in the demands of several strikes.

The story of the strike-wave that swept the country during the years from 1918 to 1920 is a history by itself. It needs special study; but lack of sufficient reliable material precludes our entering it at length. Suffice it to say that, side by side with the national struggle, the class struggle has also been developing. In the short space of four years, trade unionism has made great progress in India. It shows that the Indian proletariat has been very quick in understanding the necessity of its class organism to fight for economic interests. In the earlier days of the movement, when almost every strike was followed by turbulent disturbances created by the workers, the nationalist leaders suddenly found in it a very good weapon to be used for the purposes of demonstration. Very soon all the strikers were led and organised by nationalist leaders, who in their enthusiasm, tried to read a political character in the economic struggle of the working class. This led to the disasters of the Punjab, Bombay and other places in 1919. But the bloody baptism under nationalist leadership did not damp the spirit of the rebellious wage-slaves. What did

happen was, that the failure of the bourgeois nationalist to understand the real significance of the labour unrest, prevented him from leading it into the right channel. Consequently, the leadership of organised labour began to pass into the control of conservative reformists and government agents. Nevertheless, mass action still remains the backbone of the national struggle; and the masses are pushed on to the revolutionary ranks not so much by national enthusiasm, as by the instinct for self-preservation, which is the mother of the struggle for economic emancipation.

That the struggle of the proletariat is an affair distinct from the national movement and that what the Indian worker is really fighting for is freedom from his age-long economic bondage and social ostracism, can be seen from the innumerable strikes organised and led by the Unions. Today we find hundreds of thousands of workers all over the country, fighting with grim determination the battles of economic emancipation with the capitalist class, irrespective of nationality. How far the sense of solidarity and will to fight have progressed among the Indian proletariat can be judged from the following picture of the 50,000 textile workers of Madras who were locked-out for more than three months. The government extend full aid to the employers in their efforts to break-down the resistance of the workers, who were terrorized and prosecuted in every conceivable way. A correspondent gives the following description of the spirit of the workers after 10 weeks of struggle and starvation:

“One sees in the faces of these workers, when they assemble in thousands in their union premises every evening, a deep and silent determination to carry on the struggle in spite of all the brutal devices that are now being practised to cow them down to obedience and break the strike. ‘Are you downhearted’? The answer ‘No’ uttered by thousands of voices sends a thrill of joy among the vast assembly. But only a few can realise the real sufferings and privations of these brave people. Here is an example of endurance and suffering perhaps unparalleled in the strike phenomena of

recent times, and which is destined to have far-reaching results all over the labour world. *Still stubborn, still peaceful, still determined to endure and to suffer for their economic emancipation.*"

About a year ago, the labour unrest became so acute and wide-spread that the government found it necessary to recognise it as a problem separate from the general national movement. Commissions were appointed to investigate the causes of the unrest and devise remedies to counteract them. In its report, the Commission for Industrial Unrest in Bengal states that in the nine months, from July 1920 to March 1921, no less than 137 strikes took place in the province of Bengal alone. The following figures quoted from the report of the Commission show that the strikes were very wide-spread and affected all branches of industries.

As regards the economic loss by these strikes, it is calculated that 244,180 employees were involved and that the aggregate duration in working days was 2,631,488.

Five strikes or more occurred in the following industries :

	<i>Number of strikes</i>
Engineering and metal works	33
Jute mills	27
Transport and in the port of Calcutta	19
Public utility services	12
Coal mines	7
Cotton mills	6
Railways	5
Printing press	5

This Commission, composed of official employers, legislators and labour-leaders, made an exhaustive study of the causes of industrial unrest. In course of this study, the pre-occupation that the labour troubles were due to political agitation was greatly dissipated. *Inter alia*, the Commission says :

"Industrial unrest is only a phase of the general unrest which has prevailed since the close of the war in every

country in the world. The causes of the unrest are multifarious, political, social and economic. The economic causes are the most obvious and perhaps the most important. The increase in the cost of food-stuff, cloth and other necessities of life has been followed by a rise in the wages of all classes of labour, but the rise in wages has not at all times and in all industries, kept pace with the increase in prices. During the intervals, genuine hardship must have been caused to the labouring classes, giving rise to apprehension as to the future and a general feeling of unrest...At all events, labour is developing a new consciousness of its solidarity and value."

Out of the 134 strikes recorded in the report of the Commission 110 were due to demands for higher wages or demands for wage increase together with other concessions, 13 were the continuation of the previous strikes after the original demands had been partially or completely satisfied. The strikes were renewed due to additional claims for over-time wages, strike pay, re-institution of dismissed strikers or other reasons connected directly with the immediate interest of the workers. One remarkable feature was that only one strike was declared for better facilities for prayers on the part of the Mohammedan employees. This analysis of the strikes demonstrates the fundamental character of the unrest that has contaminated the entire working population of India.

In recommending the introduction of Joint Works Committees (on the style of Whitley Councils) the Commission makes the following interesting and significant remarks. "It is a regrettable fact that, in spite of all that has been done during the last quarter of a century to improve the material condition of the work-people in the jute mills and other large industrial concerns on the banks of the Hoogly, the *relations between the employers and employed are much less intimate and cordial than they were twenty years ago.*"

It should be indicated that the owners of the industries referred to in the report are both foreign and native. The

gravity of the industrial unrest can be gauged by the fact that the government found it necessary to appoint such a commission of enquiry and accept its recommendations. This shows that the employing class has been forced to recognise the proletariat as a factor to be contended with; and this position in the class-struggle has been reached only after four years' fight. The class-cleavage in India is very wide and the objective force of the proletariat tremendous!

It is not only in the province of Bengal that the industrial unrest has attracted the attention of the government. All the provincial as well as the central governments are gravely concerned with this problem. Why? Because the growing consciousness of its class interest makes the working class a powerful revolutionary factor, which will take part in the struggle for national freedom, not swayed by the wordy sentimentality of petty bourgeois libertarians, but in the pursuit of its ultimate economic and social liberation. To defect the most advanced section of the working class from the national struggle by advocating the protection of its immediate material interests, appears to be within the present scheme of the government. The experienced British bourgeoisie, which stands behind the Indian government, does not fail to make a clear survey of the social forces underlying the revolutionary results of the class-contradictions and antagonism in the national movement, if the awakening working class is not led on to the revolutionary path according to its class interest. This is a task which appears to be beyond the wisdom and sagacity of the nationalist leaders and naturally calls for a political party of the working class.

The first stage of the proletarian struggle, which was marked by a mad wave of spontaneous strikes, followed invariably by riots and disturbances, seems to have terminated by the end of the last year. Since then, the proletarian movement has apparently entered the period of organisation and preparation for continuing the struggle with renewed vigour in the near future. Since the beginning of the present year the strike fever seems to have been on the decline. But

now though the strikes are less frequent, they are better organised and are marked with the tendency of improving the immediate material conditions of the workers. In 1918 and 1919, the first years of proletarian struggle under nationalist leadership, the strikes cost the workers heavily, but very little was achieved by way of improving their material conditions. The nationalists were more interested in turning out a popular demonstration than to develop the revolutionary consciousness of the masses by participating in their struggle of every-day life; of course this defect of tactics of the nationalists is due to their affiliation which puts a class stamp upon their activities. The proletarian class must develop its own leadership and political career. Short-sighted nationalist tactics have temporarily driven the organised section of the proletariat into the control of those non-revolutionary elements who, however, are helping to solidify the workers' ranks. The influence of this non-revolutionary element has succeeded in curbing the strike-movement, and is trying to divert the proletarian energy into the channels of negotiation and conciliation with the employer. But this will simply embitter the antagonism, because the worker will come closer to the exploiter and will have more chances of seeing clearly the class-line that separates them.

Notwithstanding the temporary slackening of the revolutionary fervour of the working-class movement, the situation in general has not changed very much. A note issued by the Labour Office states that in the province of Bombay, six strikes were declared in the month of April 1921, involving 103,850 persons and the loss of 184,450 working days. In May there were 11 strikes and lockouts affecting 120,290 men and causing the loss of 127,115 working days; in June the number of strikes was 10 with 16,117 men taking part and the loss of working days was 79,804. The next month showed a further decrease.

The demands put forth by the strikers of late are better thought out than before, when the proletariat was led more by indignation, restiveness and agitation. Now the demands



are calculated to further the interest of the class, immediately as well as ultimately. The fight for the recognition of the unions is still going on. In many districts, the working-day has been reduced to 10 hours. Demands for participation in the profits is not infrequent. In many industrial centres, especially in Bombay, the latest demand is for universal free primary education for the children of the workers. A movement has been started for the institution of a minimum wage-board and 8-hour day. In July, a resolution to that effect was moved in the Legislative Council, but met a united opposition from the British as well as native industrial interests and was lost. The Factory Act of 1911 has been amended in spite of the opposition from the Mill Owners' Association with light concessions to the workers, including a 11-hour day for men, a 10-hour day for women and a 6-hour day for children. Almost in every province with a large industrial proletariat some sort of conciliation board has been appointed to settle the disputes between capital and labour. These are but signs which indicate which way the wind is blowing. The city proletariat has become a social, economic and political factor in the national life.

It is the development of large-scale industry which is going to determine the future of India. The revolution has already begun and is marching with gigantic strikes, disrupting the undermined structure of the village and building huge cities, whither the hapless wage-slaves are being driven by the force of circumstances. The vast masses of wage-slaves, which long since came into existence in the organism of Indian society reduced to capitalist exploitation, are in a process of concentration. The scattered forces are being mobilised into solid ranks. The consequence of this social readjustment cannot remain unfelt. In fact it is already manifesting itself very powerfully. It is the mass awakening that has at last given real potentiality to the movement for national liberation; and it is the organised, class-conscious proletariat, aided by the pauperised peasantry, which will lead the national struggle to a successful end. An unconscious ignorant mob, excited

by frothy sentiments, is no match for the mighty British imperialism. In spite of its rapid growth, the Indian bourgeoisie is still very weak and is bound to be unsteady in its purpose; but before the worker there is nothing but struggle. It is having nothing to lose but his chains, on whom ultimately depends the national freedom; but national freedom does not mean anything to him unless it brings in its train his economic and social emancipation. The national liberation of India is but a prelude to a greater thing—the social emancipation of the working class. National struggle and class-struggle are going on side by side; the noisiness of the former cannot conceal the existence of the latter.

## **6. Political Movement—I**

Before proceeding to deal with the national movement of modern India, it is necessary to review briefly the social and political events in the pre-British period. This study will help us to understand better the later developments, since these are but the inevitable consequences of the past. What is happening today has not been produced by the events exclusively of yesterday. Human history is connected with the dark ages of barbarism by the unbroken chain of evolution.

The English are not the first conquerors of India, which has been practically under foreign domination since the thirteenth century. Before the English became the political masters of the country, it had been ruled by Mohammedan conquerors. Of course, the character of the mediaeval empire of the Muslims differed greatly from the modern capitalist imperialism. But the fact remains that the domination of a conquering race interfered with the free social development of the native people, precluding thereby the evolution of a national state.

The Muslims began to invade India when the latter was in the first stage of feudalism. It was only among the Rajputs of the north that the feudal monarchy was fully developed, while the rest of the country still remained divided into a number of kingdoms partly theocratic partly patriarchal. Under such circumstances, national consciousness, embracing the

entire population that inhabited the continent of India, was naturally an impossibility. The attempts made from time to time by one or another of these kingdoms to extend its boundaries at the cost of the neighbours, were not by any means actuated by the ideal of building up a great unified nation : dynastic ambition, pure and simple, was the motive behind such attempts. Nor could the heroic opposition put up by the Rajputs against the Muslim invaders be called national resistance, because the Rajput clans fought bravely to defend the feudal right of their chiefs, whose castles, women-folk and patron-deity figured supreme among the holy objects to be defended at all costs. The Rajput chiefs led their legions to battle in order to defend the sanctity of *Rajasthan* (the abode of the kings) against the aggression of the barbarian invaders. No talk of defending India or the Indian nation was heard, unless interpolated subsequently by the zeal of patriotic writers unmindful of the process of social evolution.

Under the rule of the Muslim emperors, the greater portion of the country was brought under one central state, but not as a nation—because the court of Delhi was not the centre of a national state. The feudal imperialism of the emperors of Delhi was not based on the support of the loyal native nobility. It did not stand at the head of subordinate feudal nobles resting on serfdom as a social institution. The country was ruled, not by native feudal chiefs grown out of the people, but by nobles sent from the court of the foreign emperors. Feudal in origin, these nobles, nevertheless, could not count on the spontaneous support of the people they ruled over, because they had not grown out of the indigenous patriarchal society; power was not maintained by existing social forces within the country but by a mercenary army. The strength of Indian society lay in the decentralised village communities, which were far from being disintegrated by the advent of higher political institutions from outside. Therefore the Indian people were not unified under a centralized state power, the first requisite for the growth of a national political consciousness. The feudal hordes and mercenary armies of the invading

Muslims were able to sweep the country because a united resistance could not be put up. The social development of the native population precluded it. Only Rajputana, where feudalism had attained a high degree of development, could never be completely subdued by the Muslim emperors, because in Rajputana, the strongly centralised feudal state was the outcome of a normal social growth, while Muslim feudalism was artificially foisted upon the country.

The result of the Mohammedan conquest was that the state-feudalism introduced by it, disturbed the free evolution of native feudal society. The theocratic and partriarchal Hindu kingdoms, which would otherwise have developed into feudal monarchies, were overthrown, to be replaced by imperial provinces ruled by the court nobles with the help of mercenary armies. Feudalism, which was in the process of evolution in the native social organism, was deprived of the possibility of political expression. The political state, imperial as well as provincial, was the apparatus of a dominant social class extraneous to the country. Its expression was mainly directed against the native feudal chiefs, an increase of whose power constituted a menace to the safety—the very existence, of the Muslim authority. Thus the establishment of a more advanced form of political institution, instead of contributing towards, checked the social progress of the people. The forces that would have led the people eventually through the different stages of political and social evolution to a united national state or a number of states, were disturbed. But however suppressed, the growth of native feudalism could not altogether be thwarted. It kept on accumulating vigour, which was expressed in the form of innumerable revolts against the imperial authority. This rebellion of oppressed feudal chiefs against the supremacy of foreign state feudalism should not be mistaken for a national awakening.

Political nationhood is a comparatively recent phenomenon in the annals of human history. It is the result of a certain stage of economic development, affecting communities inhabiting a given geographical region. Diverse groups of peoples

living in the same surroundings, are gradually welded into a national entity under the pressure of economic forces. So long as these forces are not sufficiently developed, the sense of nationhood remains unknown to a people. India is no exception to this law. The extensive peninsula called India, is a mere geographical expression; it is very distinctly marked out from the mainland of Asia by physical barriers. But to hold that this geographical accident has been in itself sufficient to create a sense of national unity among the diverse communities inhabiting India, would be to misread the history of human evolution. To weld the numerous races and tribes, divided by language and grades of culture, into one national unity was conditional upon the development of a material force which could make such fusion possible. As long as the productive forces remain so backward that the different groups of the people can live in self-contained isolated communities, the simple accident of their happening to be situated within the limits of a certain geographical area does not suffice to make a nation out of them. It is only economic development that induces these isolated communities to come into relation with each other to satisfy their mutual needs. These relations may be war like or peaceful, according to the circumstances. In the period of barbarism, clans and tribes make war upon each other in quest of fertile ground; gradually the stronger one subdues and absorbs the weaker and grows into a theocratic feudal monarchy. Under the latter, the people are not united by national consciousness, but by common allegiance to the high priest or king or to both, as the case may be. The economic forces which eventually change this allegiance into rebellion are the source of political nationhood. Development of the mode of production bring into existence a new social class, the bourgeoisie, which struggles to control the production, distribution and exchange of commodities. In course of time, the political state power vested in the theocratic and feudal monarchy becomes a burden on social production, and the element controlling the latter originates the theory of nationhood, which is that the sovereign power is not vested in an

individual but in the entire community united into a nation. Under the influence of this growing social class, the bourgeoisie, which controls the productive life of the community, the national state, distinct from its feudal predecessors, is evolved. Economic relationships among the people united under such a state break down all racial, tribal, linguistic and cultural barriers; sectional isolation, prevailing hitherto, gives place to national cohesion.

Such economic development was not to be found in the resplendent Hindu kingdoms which flourished at the time of the Muslim invasions, not to mention those of earlier epochs. The Muslim conquerors naturally would not help the growth of the idea that their political power was the expression of the sovereign will of the people, subjugated by them. Since neither the Hindu kingdoms nor the Muslim empire were based upon the economic supremacy of the middle-class, those states could not produce a sense of national solidarity among the people superficially united under them. They could not unify the Indian people into a single national existence because the economic forces, which alone are capable of bringing about such a union, had not yet attained the adequate stage of development.

This absence of national consciousness in the early and medieval stage of Indian development has been a great bone of contention between the two camps of historians, namely the imperialist and nationalist. The former teaches that it was a peculiar defect of the Indian people that they never could unite upon a national basis; that this lack of national unity made the Indian people fall an easy prey to all foreign invaders; and that the unifying force of the British rule was indispensable for saving the Indian people from the political chaos and social anarchy in which they had been submerged for centuries. On the other hand, the patriotism of the nationalist historian revolts against this stamp of innate inferiority attached to his race, and he rushes to the other extreme in order to refute the imperialist interpretation of history, as if with a vengeance. He is untiring in pointing out how religious and cultural

traditions knitted the people inhabiting the continent of India, into what he calls, a 'homogeneous national unit'. Scientifically judged, both of them—the imperialist as well as the nationalist—are bad readers of history. Their subjective attitude prevents them from looking at the history of human progress as it is. The imperialist distort history to so serve the purposes of insidious propaganda; while the nationalism of a subject people of India are not inferior to other races, the nationalist historian goes so far as to assert that even among the people of primitive India, three or four thousand years ago, there existed a national consciousness. He forgets that, granted the existence of a certain religious and cultural solidarity, the presence of political nationhood is not necessarily established; it is with political nationhood that modern India is concerned, because political subjugation prevents the economic and social progress of a people. Political nationhood, and the struggle to attain a politically free national existence, in its turn, is conditional upon a certain grade of economic development in a particular people.

At the time of British conquest, that is towards the middle of the eighteenth century, the economic and political evolution of India was such that her people could be called rather a number of nationalities inhabiting a continent, than a composite national unit. It is quite possible to imagine that but for the intervention of capitalist imperialism, which while obstructing the economic growth of her people, forced on them political unity, India would be today in a socio-political stage corresponding to that of modern Europe—a continent composed of a number of free nationalities in different grades of economic and social development, but not one united nation. The march of historical events there, up till the eighteenth century did not appear to tend towards welding the diverse and often antagonistic communities into a unified national entity.

Nearly six hundred years of Muslim rule left the various Indian communities still in a more or less isolated position. The revolts against the central authority of the court of Delhi

were local, being led by feudal kings, and had grown powerful in spite of the imperial suppression. They never took the form of struggle for national liberation. Different parts of the country tried, and at last succeeded in breaking away from the empire, in different times and under the lead of different chiefs, most of whom were interested in their own particular locality. The trading and intellectual middle-class, whose mission it is to lay the foundation of a modern national edifice, had not yet become a political factor. It was only towards the end of the Moghul Empire (at the beginning of the eighteenth century) that a middle-class was found to raise its head. Up till then, under the Muslims as well as the Hindus, the state had been controlled either by the theocratic intelligentsia of the Brahmans, or the military caste of the Kshatriyas, or the Muslim feudal nobility having no organic relation with the native society. Under such conditions, the idea of a national state embracing the entire country was inconceivable.

In the earlier decades of the eighteenth century the Muslim feudal imperialism broke down, after having ruled over the country approximately for five hundred years. By that time the middle-class had become an important factor in socio-economics, but nevertheless, it was still hedged in by feudal fetters on one side and by the caste guilds of the village communities on the other. Although the village still retained its position as the productive unit, the exchange and distribution of commodities had given rise to large towns which had become centres of prosperous trade carried on by an opulent middle-class. Production itself could no longer be kept rigidly confined within the limits of the village community. It had greatly lost its former individualistic character. In the large towns were accumulated numerous classes of handicraftsmen producing more for exchange than for use. This transformation in the economic life of the country had not only created a prosperous middle-class engaged in trade, but enabled the rich traders to make their influence felt in the political field, in spite of the fact that the ruling feudal aristocracy, Hindu as well as Muslim, looked down upon them. The various independent states that sprang



into being upon the ruins of the Moghul Empire, found themselves largely controlled financially by the trading class, although their political structure still remained feudal. This rising middle-class foreshadowed the development of a higher form of political state based no longer upon feudal or dynastic authority, but upon the theory of nationhood—a political theory still to be evolved.

The collapse of the feudal empire of the Moghuls, however, was not caused directly and exclusively by the rise of the middle-class. The Muslim state-feudalism maintained by military force, was subverted by the growth of native feudal monarchies which were more virile because of their closer contact with the people, whose serfdom constituted the social basis of their power. In the days of the Moghul Empire, its armies had become mere bands of marauders, without any vital connection with the people. The leaders of these armies were mere adventurers looking for personal aggrandisement than defenders of an existing economic and political order. Instead of defending the integrity of the Empire, the nobility of the effete court utilised their control of the army for the realisation of personal ambition, and a good many of them ended by establishing independent kingdoms headed by their respective dynasties. Its own internal disintegration, together with the rise of the Sikh, Rajput and Maratha powers, caused the disruption of the Moghul Empire. These three might all be looked upon as the revindication of native feudalism, whose normal growth had been disturbed and delayed by the introduction of Muslim state-feudalism.

When the Moghul Empire declined in the first part of the eighteenth century, there existed in the country a trading and intellectual middle-class which objectively was the most progressive social factor. It was destined to capture the political state power eventually, because its economic growth could not fully be realised under feudal political institutions. But it was not yet strong enough to enter the contest openly for political supremacy. A state which is to be the political

expression of middle-class must be based upon the theory of the sovereignty of the people, because the middle-class cannot overthrow and supplant the feudal power without the support of the people. So, on the eve of beginning its struggle for political power, the middle-class formulates the theory of nationhood based upon the so-called 'natural right' of the people, to rule itself through delegated or elected representatives. But the Indian bourgeoisie in that period had not yet evolved a political ideology of its own. Its socio-economic position was such, that it was forced to remain the unseen power behind the throne on which the feudal monarchs still sat. There was, therefore, no force to contest the absolute authority of the latter. Its political immaturity prevented the middle-class from initiating and heading a movement having for its object the establishment of a national state, based upon democratic principles. Consequently, the dissolution of the Muslim power was followed by a long period of chaos and anarchy from the midst of which arose the Maratha feudal monarchy.

The rise of the Maratha power marks the first stages of the political nationalism in the history of India. The Maratha kings, under the influence of their ministers, who belonged to the Brahman intelligentsia, conceived the idea of establishing a Hindu federal empire on the ruins of the Muslim supremacy. This project of founding a national state was realised to a certain extent, not alone by the feudal chiefs, but under the rule of the Brahman ministers, who captured the political power of the state, peacefully replacing the royal dynasty. The federal empire of the Marathas was consolidated, not under the leadership of the feudal dynasty which had originally started the revolt against the Moghul power, and which eventually contributed to its dissolution more than any other factor, but under the astute statesmanship of the Brahman intelligentsia in control of the state power, including the victorious military forces. Its political philosophy, however, could hardly be separated from feudal traditions. Consequently, before the primitive Hindu

nationalism of the Marathas could crystallize itself as such, it degenerated into medieval imperialism of the worst sort. The fact that the Maratha Confederacy itself was, ere long, dismembered into several principalities fighting against each other, proves that the ideal of a national state had not been realised. It was not so much the awakening national consciousness as the military prowess of the Marathas, which defeated the mercenary armies of the decrepit Moghul Empire.

The Maratha Confederacy failed to consolidate the people into a national unit, because the economic foundation of the society on which such a political super-structure could be sustained for any length of time, had been shaken. The economic life of the country was no longer nourished exclusively by serf labour; the rise of the middle-class, given to prosperous trade and banking, signified a radical change in the productive forces. A state power that could, in the period, assume a national character, should have been built on the economic factor; should have been the political apparatus in the hand of the trading-class; should have brought peace and order out of chaos and anarchy in order to help the development of the new productive forces. Instead of using it for pillage and plunder, it should have wielded its military power as a police force. These are the characteristics of the bourgeois state; but the feudal character of Maratha power prevented it from adapting its nationalism to the contemporary economic factors and social tendencies. Thus, despite its patriotism, based on religious antagonism, the Maratha power could not help but degenerate into rabid imperialism, which was instrumental in ruining the country, instead of contributing to the growth of nationhood. The Maratha revolt against the Muslim authority failed to realise its original programme, viz. the building up of a unified Hindu nation—because it was the political and military expression of native feudalism, which had been suppressed by Muslim Imperialism. But feudalism, as a socio-economic institution had objectively reached the stage of decline; it could no

longer be the state power. Therefore, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the Indian people refused to respond to the reactionary cult of the religio-political nationalism preached by a feudal state. Instead of being a unifying force, the Maratha power degenerated to such an extent that its very name became a terror all over the country.

By the time the representative of the English trading bourgeoisie began the first stages of struggle for political power in India, the Marathas had reached the pinnacle of ascendancy, and were already on the decline. The political chaos and social anarchy reigning since the beginning of the eighteenth century, had reached their climax. Civil war was the order of the day, and the economic life of the country was seriously injured. Feudalism, Hindu as well as Muslim, had landed in political bankruptcy, having failed to maintain an established government ruling over any considerable part of the country. It could not bring order out of chaos. A more advanced social factor had to appear on the field in order to build a political institution appropriate to the situation; a social factor that could count upon the tacit support of the people at large by advancing social progress; a social factor that could put an end to the ruinous civil wars and inaugurate an era of economic reconstruction and political peace. A progressive middle-class, controlling production and distribution by means of trades capital, was this power-to-be. This element did exist in the country at the moment, but its development had been rather stunted and immature owing to the troubled conditions obtaining just about the time that it assumed the proper social significance. The English bourgeoisie, which happened to appear on the scene in the person of the East India Company, as it were, took the hint from history and began to establish its domination over the country with the *aid of the Indian people themselves*.

Maratha nationalism, sanctified by religious traditions, failed to enlist the support even of the various Hindu communities; but a handful of foreign traders could become the paramount power of the country without meeting any serious

popular resistance. The British East India Company happened to embody the social force which alone was able to secure what the Indian people badly needed. This was a form of government which could bring peace and order to the country. The people were craving for the cessation of the civil war ravaging the land. Every class, except the doomed feudal rulers and their henchmen given to plunder and pillage, cried for settled conditions, and would welcome any government which could assure it. Peasants, artisans, traders, intellectuals, all were sick of the civil war which had affected more or less seriously their respective material interests. The peasant could not peacefully till his land unless the danger of marauding hordes tramping over it was removed; artisans and traders suffered alike because the general insecurity of life and transportation had ruined commerce, and the heavy tolls levied by the irresponsible rulers were killing the economic life of the country; the intellectuals needed an established order of society in order to thrive. The foreign traders also required settled conditions. Thus it happened that the material interests of the would-be conqueror coincided with those of the about-to-be conquered. The representatives of the British bourgeoisie entered the field of political aggression with the standard of 'peace and order', and soon became the paramount power of India with the aid and connivance of the Indian people themselves.

At the time of British conquest, the Indian people were nothing but a mass of humanity, in the period of transition from a disintegrated feudalism to a higher stage of social evolution. The forces that could weld it into a national entity in the political sense, had not yet fully developed. The imperialist theory that the people of India were incapable of ruling themselves, and therefore, needed the protection and guidance of a more civilised nation, is preposterous. But what is historically true is that in the first part of the eighteenth century, Indian stood in need of a new social force which could lead her out of the chaos and anarchy resulting from the breakdown of the feudal states. In the bourgeoisie was to be

found the saviour. The failure of the Maratha confederacy had demonstrated that a national state could not be build upon the basis of feudalism. A higher form of political institutuon was necessary, and this new institution should have been the bourgeois state resting on the theory of the sovereignty of the people—political nationhood. But the native middle-class failed to rise to the situation. It had not attained the necessary political maturity.

If a handful of English merchants could subdue such a vast population and one not in a barbarous stage of development, it was not, as the nationalists hold simply because of the 'devilish perfidy' of the invaders. There were deeper social reasons behind the tragic episode called the British conquest of India. Such an outstanding historical event cannot be explained light-heartedly away with the flourish of such eloquent phrases as 'unscrupulous intrigues of perfidious Albion', marshalled by the conquered; nor as 'an agreeable accident of history' piously pronounced by the apologists of British Imperialism. To an unprejudiced student, the British conquest of India does indeed appear more as an accident than as the result of consummate intrigues. But to call it an accident pure and simple, divorced from the gigantic scheme of human progress, might flatter imperial egoism, but it betrays sheer ignorance of social history. The British conquest of India is one of those accidents which are not very rare in human history—accidents precipitated by the coincidence of events and forces developing with method, and in conformity with definite material laws. The English traders who came to the shores of India without any political pretensions, could eventually establish a great and mighty empire, because they happened to embody the social force which, in accordance with the imperious material laws determining all human progress, was next to assert itself over the political life of the country.

The British East India Company succeeded in establishing its political domination over India with the help of, and subsequently at the cost of, the native trading class which,

together with the intelligentsia, constituted the progressive and objectively most revolutionary factor of Indian society in the middle and latter parts of the eighteenth century. In order to consolidate its power, the Company's government had to enlist the support of a sufficiently strong social class, since otherwise the political domination of a handful of foreigners could not be expected to endure. The natural ally was of course, the native trading class, since it belonged to the same social category as the foreign invader. In fact, the native trader did enter into an alliance with the British Company even before the latter had entered the political struggle and render it valuable services. It was a social struggle, in which national differentiation was overwhelmed by imperious economic necessities.

The religious role of freeing the people from feudal fetters did not fall to the lot of the Indian middle-class libertarians. It was misappropriated by the British bourgeoisie, represented by the East India Company. The facility with which the English aggressor could defeat one after another the feudal monarchies with armies recruited from among the native peasantry, demonstrated that the social foundation of Indian feudalism was decayed. The forces for overthrowing feudalism had grown in the social organism. The tragedy was, that it was not the native bourgeoisie which marshalled and led these revolutionary forces on the path of social progress, but a foreign agency which appeared on the scene at the critical moment and exploited the revolutionary forces for its own benefit, thereby throttling Indian social progress and causing national stagnation.

The thread-bare feudal political structures collapsed like so many houses of cards before the attack of the foreign commercial bourgeoisie, because the latter objectively corresponded to and was actually backed by the native social forces which would have performed the same exploit, perhaps somewhat later, had not the English intruded. Thus, by overthrowing feudalism from the political power, the English invaders did perform a revolutionary act; but it was not long

before they transformed themselves into a counter-revolutionary force obstructing the progress of those very native elements which had helped them come to power. The British bourgeoisie was interested in the establishment of a colonial state, which did not need the same economic foundation as a bourgeois national state. The exploitation of an imperial bourgeoisie governing a colonial country, does not follow the same line as that of a national bourgeoisie. The progress and prosperity of the latter require the fomenting of national consciousness and then of jingoism in the people, while the former obstructs the growth of national consciousness. To let the social forces develop, which brought the English traders to political power, would have meant the inevitable rise of the native bourgeoisie, a factor positively dangerous to the safety of the foreign domination. Therefore, the policy of the British Indian government was to crush the native trading class. Its power of resistance broken, feudalism was perpetuated in the persons of newly-created landed aristocracy and impotent native states. The reinstatement of the feudal show however, put the peasantry back into practical serfdom. All economic progress was made impossible by the coercion of the state. Thus, the British conquest of India, which could be called a *coup d'etat* made by a foreign bourgeoisie with the help of a series of rather premature revolutionary forces, brought peace and order. But the peace soon proved to be the inactivity of the exhausted. The British power secured its own position in India by economic suppression and the social stagnation and political slumber that unavoidably followed it. First utilized and misled, then betrayed and ultimately wantonly destroyed by its more developed foreign prototype with a state power behind it, the Indian middle-class remained practically non-existent politically, for a considerable time after its fore-fathers had helped the English lay the foundation of their Indian Empire. The economic suppression of the propertied and intellectual middle-class, made a liberal bourgeois political movement impossible. The absence of a bourgeoisie precluded the evolution of those



forces that make for the national consciousness of a people. Such was the background out of which has evolved the modern political movements of India. The political nationalism of modern India expresses the political ideology and aspiration of a youthful bourgeoisie, which has risen in spite of innumerable obstacles and which has never had the opportunity of utilising the state apparatus for disseminating and inculcating in the people the idea of nationhood. But at the same time, it enjoys the advantage of shielding its exploitations under the cry against foreign oppression. The nationalism of contemporary India lacks the tradition of a national unity, but it rests on the reaction against a common oppression. This negative basis, however, renders the national liberation movement led by the bourgeoisie, inherently weak. Therefore, the political liberation of the oppressed people of India depends less on the nationalism of the bourgeoisie than on the struggle of the exploited masses for economic and social emancipation. It will be seen presently how the political movement in the India of today is being strengthened by the class struggle that is overshadowing the nationalist sentiment, which has never gone beyond the limits of a certain section of the middle-class.

## **7. Political Movement—II**

The first hundred years of British rule was a period of social and political stagnation resulting from the ruthless destruction of the progressive tendencies in production. The political power passed on to the control of a foreign bourgeoisie which, instead of helping the development of higher productive methods, pushed the society back, to the stage of agrarian economy. This told heavily on the native middle-class, which had already reached an advanced stage of trades capitalism and was standing on the eve of large-scale industrial production. Economic suppression of the native middle-class precluded the possibility of a political movement of a modern democratic character. There was no other element in the native population which could resist or be

hostile to the foreign ruler. The programme of 'peace and order', which was gradually realised, secured the foreign conqueror active support from certain sections and the passive connivance of the masses of the population. The much longed for peace put the society, as it were, to a political sleep.

Peace established by a bourgeois state is usually followed by social progress and economic prosperity of a certain section of the people. But the peace, which the British conquest gave to India, turned to be the listlessness of the paralytic; the order was not that of a new society evolved out of the decayed old—it was the artificial maintenance of the *status quo* which had been disturbed by the rise of new social forces. The fact of its being a colonial government turned the bourgeois state established by the English in India, into a reactionary force, because its safety and continued existence had to be secured by the destruction of all progressive forces in the native society. The practical elimination of the bourgeoisie from the political field made the growth of the spirit of nationhood an impossibility. The government was a bourgeois political institution, and as such was indeed an improvement on the older forms the country had evolved, but it was not a national state. Therefore its policy was not to foment national consciousness by means of public instruction, a capitalist press, ceremonies etc., but to keep the people in their primitive ignorance. In order to hold the society in a backward state, skeletons of the undermined feudal structure were maintained and pampered. These impotent feudal rulers, together with the newly-created landed aristocracy to which the rich trading class was cleverly diverted, constituted the social basis of the British rule for more than a hundred years. So in spite of being in itself a bourgeois state, the British Indian government allied itself with the conservative and reactionary element of the native population. This unholy alliance enabled it to betray and choke its former partner, the native trading and intellectual middle-class. The

elimination of the latter caused a social reaction inevitably followed by political apathy.

Such a social atmosphere, which prevailed till after the middle of the nineteenth century, was not conducive to the evolution of any political movement of a national character. The revolt of 1857 was the first serious attempt to overthrow the British domination; but by no means could it be looked upon as a national movement. It was nothing more than the last spasm of the dying feudalism. In so far as it aimed at the overthrow of foreign domination, which had obstructed the social growth of the people, the revolt of 1857 was revolutionary; but socially it was a reactionary movement, because it wanted to replace British rule by revived feudal imperialism, either of the Mughals or the Marathas. This objectively reactionary character was the reason of its failure. It could not have been suppressed had it been a progressive national movement, led by the native bourgeoisie with advanced social ideas and political programme. But such a movement was impossible in that epoch. The necessary social elements were absent. The following opinion of the imperialist historian Seeley is on the whole a correct interpretation of the situation:

We could subdue the mutiny of 1857, formidable as it was, because it spread through only a part of the army, because the people did not actively sympathize with it, because it was possible to find Indian races who would fight on our side. The moment a mutiny is threatened, which shall be no more mutiny, but the expression of a universal feeling of nationality, at that moment all hope is at an end of preserving our empire. For we are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule her as conquerors.

The revolt of 1857 was predominantly a military mutiny brought about by the intrigues of the deposed and discontented feudal chiefs. The people at large had very little to do with it; the majority of them either remained passive or helped the British government. The only powerful Indian community with some sense of national solidarity, rendered valuable services to the British. It was the Sikhs, who had maintained

an independent national state until but a few years before the mutiny, whose military aid contributed largely to the suppression of the rebellion. The English system of education introduced in the 30's, had brought into existence a small class of modern intellectuals who could be looked upon as the forerunners of the national movement of the subsequent epoch. The mutiny found all these intellectuals with modern and progressive thought, on the side of the British government. Only in some of the minor native states the people were somewhat drawn into the revolt because feudalism was still a living force in those parts. The failure of the mutiny proved that the intrigues of a backward social force, doomed to death by history, could not realize a national unity in opposition to a foreign domination which, nevertheless, objectively embodied an advanced political thought. The country was still undergoing a reaction against the long period of chaos and anarchy through which it had passed, and would thus stand by that political power which could ensure peace and order, however dearly the latter might cost.

Orthodox nationalists of a later period looked upon and interpreted the rebellion of 1857 as a great struggle for independence. This tendency betrays the grave danger of reaction which is contained in the nationalism built on a religious basis. No Indian nationalist who stands for the social progress of his people and who struggles for political independence as a step towards that goal, would be treading the right path by clinging to the sentiments that lay behind the revolt of 1857, which was not merely a military effort to overthrow the foreign domination. It was provoked by a fierce spirit of social reaction, being a revolt not against the British government in particular, but against the advanced social and political ideas it embodied—the ideas which were hailed by the intellectual middle-class of India, because the latter was materially prepared for them, and would itself have evolved them, had they not been brought into the country through the agency of a foreign conqueror. In fact, the foreign 'barbarians', against whom the ideological leaders of the mutiny

sought to incite the Indian masses, were detrimental to the untrammelled evolution of progressive social and political thought in the native middle-class, inasmuch as they obstructed the latter's economic development.

A hundred years had passed since the British began to implant their political domination in the country. The earlier years of their rule were marked by wanton economic suppression, which was executed partly by plunder and spoilation, partly by destroying the native handicraft industry in competition with the machine production of England. The former method was used against the feudal rulers, while the latter served to reduce the trading class to social inaction and political impotency. The wisdom of the policy of basing British domination on the landed aristocracy, inaugurated under the direction of a semi-feudal Parliament at home, came to be questioned by not a few Englishmen in the government of India. These representatives of the English liberal bourgeoisie held that it was dangerous to rely on a reactionary social element. They suggested that the middle-class was the natural ally and that its intellectual growth should be helped by the government. This new tendency was expressed in the desire to introduce Western education into India. The object was to allow the progressive forces of the native society an intellectual expression, which however, being devoid of any economic might, would not be able to be politically dangerous, but at the same time would constitute a bulwark against possible reactionary upheavals. A pure political manoeuvre on the part of the British rulers, this policy was interpreted by the apostles of reaction as a clever design to undermine their hold on the people; nevertheless, obviously contrary to the expectation of its promoters, it marked the birth of modern India. Inadvertently, it let loose that dynamic social force which was destined to prove eventually mortal to the British, and in order to be able to fulfil its historic mission, had to prove itself an enemy of the native reactionary elements which stood in the way of progress in the name of national culture and traditions. As a result of this policy of

introducing Western education, a class of intellectuals with modern thoughts and progressive tendencies had come into existence already in the 30's of the nineteenth century. Still in its infancy, this progressive element showed signs of vigour in social and religious reformism, if not in the political field, which was naturally closed to it owing to the economic stagnation in which it was forcibly kept. But its very existence, which happened to be still under the fatally miscalculated patronage of the British government, was a challenge to the old order of things. The social significance of the revolt of 1857 was the reaction it embodied against this revolutionary force, which had not appeared as such till then, but which was the harbinger of a new India, to be dominated neither by a foreign imperialism however liberal, nor by the native conservatism however glorified.

“All the vested interests connected with the old order of things in the religious as well as in the political domain, felt the ground swaying under their feet, and the peril with which they were confronted came not only from their alien rulers but from their own countrymen, often, of their own caste and race, who had fallen into the snares and pitfalls of an alien civilization.” These words of Valentine Chirol can be taken as a picture of the social background of the mutiny, if only the last phrase is substituted by “who had awakened to the ideas that the old social and political institutions were detrimental to the future progress of India”. The failure of the Mutiny proved conclusively that the people of India were not united by the old social institutions and religious traditions—that the future of India was to be secured not by the impossible revival of the old order of things, but by the birth of a new force arising upon the ruins of the old. The birth of this new force was obstructed, but could not be prevented by the foreign ruler.

The safe continuation of the foreign domination, however, still needed the sinister services of the reactionary forces in order to keep the masses of the population away from the influence of the progressive intellectuals. The social and

religious superstitions were very useful in keeping the people in ignorance and resigned to their position. Therefore in the memorable *Queen's Proclamation* which followed the suppression of the Revolt, was emphasized the determination of the British Government "to abstain from all interference with religious beliefs or worship". This was obviously a concession to the forces of reaction, whose good graces should be enlisted as a counterpoise against the rising progressive intellectuals, who were always looked upon with suspicion on account of their objectively revolutionary character. The vanguard of the native society, they could not however be alienated, because their support was the most reliable foundation on which the foreign rule could rest itself. Therefore, in order to demonstrate that the British government was not inimical to the aspirations of the intellectuals, the following liberal and democratic clause was also incorporated in the same proclamation : "British subjects of whatever race or creed will be freely and impartially admitted to the offices in the services of the Crown, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge." But in the same breath it is added "in framing and administering the law, due regard will be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India" as if to reassure the conservative elements that their social rights and privileges would be protected by the government.

From such a background has arisen the forces which made for the political movements of modern India. The policy of the British government in the first half of the nineteenth century at the same time obstructed and contributed to the evolution of that social-class, on which depended the formulation of the idea of nationhood of the Indian people. By protecting the factors which made for social reaction, even long after the feudal political power was broken, the government rendered the growth of national consciousness among the mass of people impossible; but on the other hand, in the person of the intellectuals educated in modern ideas, were allowed to be born the forerunners of Indian nationalism.

Ever since the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, by which time British domination was fairly consolidated, there had existed the tendency to enlist for the government the support of the native intelligentsia, which, without an economically strong middle-class behind itself, could not constitute a political danger. This tendency naturally gave birth to the controversy over the introduction of the Western system of education. The opposition against it was strong, first from the English administrators, then from the conservative Indians. The former held that the introduction of modern education would sooner or later widen the political vision of the native middle-class. Putting forward this point of view, Sir John Malcolm sounded an alarm in the following words pronounced in 1813 : "It will be something like suicide if we will increase the facilities for education in India." The class instinct and imperialist caution, which made him utter this warning, have since been very well justified. The Indians were against English education, because they saw in it a covert attack on their religious and social institutions. This apprehension was based on the fact that it was the Christian missionaries who first opened English schools.

The new policy of drawing the native intelligentsia closer to the government triumphed when a Special Committee appointed by the Parliament after the Reform Bill of 1833, reported that "Indians were alive to the grievance of being excluded from a larger share in the executive government" and testified that "such exclusion is not warranted on the score of their own incapacity for business or the want of application or trustworthiness." On the basis of this testimony it was laid down that "no native of the said Indian territories shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company", which was the government of India in those days.

It was indeed a bold step on the part of the British bourgeoisie to have brought Western education within the reach of the Indian intelligentsia. It broke the spell of reactionary



nationalism, which subsequently took the violent expression of the mutiny, but laid the foundation on which was built eventually the theory of the political nationhood of the Indian people. Macaulay, who is to be thanked more than any body else for the introduction of Western education into India, appeared to have understood the gravity of the step he was advocating, and perhaps even the fatality involved in it. Because in course of the debate on the question in 1833 he put to the British Parliament these ominous questions : "Do you think we can give the Indians knowledge without awakening their ambition? Do you think we can awaken their ambition without giving some legitimate vent for it?" What induced the British imperialists to start on such a dangerous path in spite of having foreseen what lay ahead? It was indeed not the humanitarian mission of civilizing the backward people as the imperialist prophets preach. The object was to foment the growth of a native element which would consciously support the British government as the most beneficial political institution—an element so educated as to understand that any other form of government based on native traditions, would be a step backward in the path of social progress. The wisdom of this policy was demonstrated by the part played by the modern intelligentsia during the revolt of 1857. The immediate effect of the introduction of English education was the adherence of the most progressive native element to the rule of the foreign bourgeoisie. This adherence was complete, being moral and intellectual as well as political. With this achievement, British domination found itself planted on a more secure ground, that of the social class historically destined to be the political leader of the people. The young, progressive elements of Indian society of the early Victorian age proved to be a useful appendix to the foreign ruling-class. The economic suppression of the middle-class precluded the possibility of its being politically revolutionary, which it nevertheless was, as an objective social force. Therefore its activities were confined to the fields of social and religious

reforms—activities which invoked upon its members the wrath of the forces of reaction and conservatism.

The alacrity and enthusiasm with which English education was hailed by a section of the rich middle-class, shows that the latter was in a receptive mood. Modern political ideals and advanced social philosophies were studied earnestly by thousands of young men not only in the schools and colleges in India, but many of those who could afford went to the Universities in England, thus violating the old social prohibitions. Judged from the point of view of the native culture and traditions, the first generations of the modern-educated intelligentsia could be called de-nationalized, because they were more English than Indian. Their religion was that of Spencer and Comte, their philosophy that of Bentham and Mills. But they were the first rebels, boldly raising a voice challenging the old order of things, and heralding the birth of a new India which could not come into existence without shattering the still cherished religious and social ideal and institutions of old. In the earlier days they were politically impotent, but it was not long before these so called de-nationalized intellectuals proved to be the fathers of the modern political nationalism of India.

With the suppression of the revolt of 1857, feudalism was altogether eliminated from the political domain, notwithstanding the fact that for convenience, imperialist domination still perpetuated its hollow skeleton clothed in comic pomp and grandeur. The economic backbone of the native bourgeoisie had long ago been broken. The evolution of higher means of production having been obstructed for the benefit of colonial capitalism, the overwhelming majority of the population lived in villages steeped in ignorance and submerged in social stagnation. Politics, forms of government, national subjugation of freedom remained matters outside their concern and beyond their comprehension. The only section of the people showing any sign of life was the modern intellectuals educated in Western methods and thoughts. The numerical strength of this class was infinitesimal in comparison with

the vast population economically suppressed, socially stagnant and politically inarticulate. Trained in the school of bourgeois liberalism and staunch believers in English constitutional traditions, these 'de-nationalized' intellectuals were instrumental in bringing to India, for the first time in her long eventful history, political patriotism. The rise of a class educated in modern political thought marked the beginning of a movement which was to develop into a struggle for national liberation, to culminate eventually in the establishment of a centralized state embracing the various communities, united by common oppression, and represented by a native bourgeoisie strong economically, and ambitious for political supremacy.

The economic development of the middle-class having been impeded first by political instability and civil wars before the English government was established, and then by the capture of state power by a foreign capitalist imperialism, the modern ideology of bourgeois democracy could not evolve out of the native society. But when modern political thoughts became accessible by means of foreign education, Indian intellectuals responded to them enthusiastically. Being a bourgeois state, the Government of India was at first accepted by them as the best political institution. However it was not long before they discovered the discrepancy between the theory and practice of British political philosophy, in so far as the Indian administration was concerned. Having been taught by English authorities that representative government was the noblest of the political institutions and that the world was indebted to the Anglo-Saxon race for this blessing, the Indian intellectuals found in the British government of India a total negation of the principle of popular representation. This discovery created discontent in them, their Anglicism notwithstanding. Thus was initiated the first stage of the struggle for representative government. This struggle of the radical intelligentsia was not against an effete and antiquated political institution, but for the democratization of the existing government which, by virtue of its being controlled by the

bourgeoisie, was the most advanced that the country had had till then. The ideology of this struggle had to be therefore, borrowed from the English bourgeoisie itself. Disciples of English schools of political philosophy and admirers of British constitutionalism, the pioneers of the Indian national movement could not question the legitimacy and authority of the government established and carried on in the name of that greatest constitutional democratic body—the British Parliament. Their contention was that the government of India should live upto the doctrines of popular representation, the cornerstone of all bourgeois political structures.

The agitation for giving the British government of India a representative character was obviously based on the theory of nationhood inherent in the people. A central state had been established uniting the people of India in one political entity, which awakened in the liberal intellectual the vision of an Indian nation desiring to be represented in the administration of its public affairs. This new nationalism was not founded on the old traditions nor cultural unity of the Indian people. It was a political conception having for its object the establishment of a bourgeois national state. The idea of the political nationhood of the people led the intellectual democrats to think that they were their popular representatives, and as such had the right to be included in the government of the country. Their former docile admiration for the British government gradually changed into criticism, 'loyal opposition'. Such was the origin and evolution of the political movement in the 70's and early 80's.

The intellectuals trained in modern political thoughts laid down the theoretical foundation for the nationalism which was still to come, but the dynamic cause behind the movement was the economic revival of the native middle-class, after more than a hundred years of repression. The years following the revolt of 1857 were marked by a policy of reconciliation on the part of the British government. The modernized intellectuals and the progressive trading-class, which rendered valuable services in the critical days of the Mutiny, were patronized

to some extent. The former, engaged in liberal professions and public administration, grew rich, while the latter was also becoming prosperous on account of the thriving internal trade, whose volume increased in proportion to the import of manufactured commodities and export of raw materials. Considerable wealth was accumulated in the hands of both these elements, and consequently the desire for economic expansion was felt. The number of English-educated young men was rapidly growing. The liberal professions were becoming overcrowded. The government could not employ very many of these young men in higher posts without running the risk of losing control of the public administration. The native capitalist class could not be allowed to enter the industrial field without violating of the imperialist monopoly.

Economic disabilities created the necessity of political revolution. The time came when the most powerful elements of the Indian population felt their ambitions restricted by the foreign government. Intellectuals found the doors to the higher administrative positions closed to them; and the industrial expansion of the capitalist middle-class also met resistance from the government. The political movement was initiated by the former, armed with the doctrines of representative government learnt from English authorities, and was subsequently reinforced by the latter. Although the dynamic force of the movement against foreign rule is to be primarily looked for in the revival of the native capitalist-class, the formulation of the philosophy of Indian nationhood must be attributed to the liberal intellectuals, who are usually scorned by the orthodox nationalists as 'de-nationalized patriots'. Opposition of the British government could be put up otherwise than in the name of the nation. A common school of education united the intellectuals on a common field of activities in order to realize the same aspirations. They began the struggle in the name of the people of India as a political unit which they claimed to represent, and whose national interest they pretended to defend. Thus the forerunners of Indian nationalism, who were as much divorced from the national life and tradition, culturally and

ideologically, as the English rulers themselves, assumed the role of popular representatives.

The fathers of Indian nationalism could be called rather constitutional democrats and reformers than nationalist. They believed more in English political ethics than in the social and cultural teachings of their forefathers. Their cult was not of nationalism, but of representative government. Unlike the progenitors of the European bourgeoisie, they were not evolving the doctrines of a new state based on new social relations. Socially they were revolutionaries, while politically they were but reformers, because the political revolution with the object of building a bourgeois state on the ruins of feudalism, had been accomplished in the form of the British conquest. Therefore their political struggle consisted in pointing out that the British Indian government did not comply with all the teachings of the prophets of the English school of constitutional liberalism. They constituted an opposition—but a 'loyal' opposition, to the policy of maintaining a strict British monopoly on the administration of the country. Their class instinct made them conform with the established government, so long as it was controlled by the bourgeoisie, nationality making no difference. They were not against the fundamentals of the bourgeois philosophy of state. They were convinced that any other form of state would not be compatible with their progressive social ideals, which were antagonistic to native traditions of feudal autocracy, absolute monarchy, religious reaction and patriarchal conservatism. They implicitly believed with their English preceptors, that the progress of the people, the civilization of the nation, would be realized under the protection of an enlightened government. But such a form of government could not be evolved from the contemporary Indian society, in which they educated, progressive and propertied middle-class still remained and almost negligible factor. Therefore they accepted the political institutions introduced by the British bourgeois imperialist as the best that the country had had till then. But according to the doctrines of bourgeois democracy, which were supposed to be the guiding

principles of British rule, these institutions should be representative. An enlightened modern government should draw its authority from the people, in whose name it must rule. The government of India should be representative of the people; it must become a democratic institution by including the progressive intellectuals in its structure. Here in this demand, if it could be called a demand in those days, lay the germ of the idea of nationhood developed later on in accordance with the growth of the native middle-class.

Behind this demand for representative government, which looked like academic discussions indulged in by young intellectual visionaries, lurked the urges of economic interest which eventually supplied the motive-power of the national movement. So far, in return for the peace and order which it undoubtedly established, the British government in India had kept the natives excluded from the domain of political and military authority, in order to secure for the imperialist bourgeoisie a position of great privilege in the field of economic exploitation permitting the dissemination of modern education, which awakened the Indian intelligentsia to a new political vision, had not in any way changed the policy of the British government, formulated as far back as 1833 in these words of the then Governor-General: "Our very existence depends upon the exclusion of the native from military and political power." Ruthless economic exploitation, aided by the policy of obstructing industrial development through native capitalist enterprise had prevented the rise of a class which might contest this monopoly. In its earlier generation, the modern intelligentsia did not constitute a political factor; on the contrary, it served the purpose of the imperialist bourgeoisie by denouncing the native social and religious institutions as well as political backwardness. This attitude of the most 'enlightened and progressive element of her people was used by the imperialists to prove that India could not govern herself and needed the protection of a civilized nation. But the growth of a middle-class, notwithstanding all obstacles, changed the

attitude of the intelligentsia, which retaining still its admiration for and faith in British constitutionalism, began to agitate for representative institutions. The representation sought for was evidently in the interest of the middle-class. The claim was that the government of the country should not overlook the aspirations of the propertied and intellectual middle-class, in order to be recognized as the best political institution for the country. The spiritual vanguard of the modern bourgeoisie that is the Western educated intelligentsia, was the first to register its claim, joined subsequently by its capitalist colleague. The intellectuals wanted to be admitted to the higher administrative positions as representatives of the governed, and later on this programme of administrative reform was supplemented by the demand for fiscal autonomy, which voiced the aspiration of the nascent native capitalist-class.

The expression of the aspiration of a social class with identical economic interests but still in its infancy was clothed in the language of the democratic scriptures of 'National Will', 'Sovereign Prerogative of the People' etc. The rise of the modern middle-class, capitalist as well as intellectual, marked the laying of the foundation of Indian nationalism in the political sense. In order to prove that, according to the principles of democracy, they were entitled to be parts of the government, the bourgeoisie intellectuals began to talk of the Indian as a political unit whom they claimed to represent. Had not the forerunners of the Indian bourgeoisie been suffocated in the middle of the eighteenth century by historical accidents, they would have built, most probably, several modern nations out of the mass of humanity living on the continent of India. A hundred and fifty years later began the renaissance of the Indian bourgeoisie, but under different circumstances. History had deprived it of the noble role of liberating the people from feudal serfdom, but its new mission was no less imposing and no more altruistic. It was to assume the leadership of the Indian people, united and led in the struggle for national liberation, which would be achieved by replacing the foreign



domination with the democratic dictatorship of the native bourgeoisie.

As soon as the young intelligentsia began to extend its activities to the political field, the British government found in it no longer a support, which it really had been, so long as it had occupied itself in attacks against native social and religious institutions. The British government was not slow in foreseeing the inevitable. It could read a serious menace in the apparently tame and impotent agitation for representative institutions and an 'open door' to the public services. The demand for popular representation, however mild at first, heralded the appearance of a class which would sooner or later dispute the political supremacy of the British, and would do so in the name of the people united into a nation, demanding autonomy and democratic government.

In the years preceding the organization of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the industrial aspiration of the native capitalist-class had been expressed in the growing number of modern factories, which, however, could not thrive on account of the competition of imperialist capital, as well as the determined hostility of the Indian government. It was imminent that the intellectuals with political education would constitute a revolutionary factor, by agitating for the interests and grievances of their own class, as well as those of the struggling capitalists. The cause for a potential political movement had been accumulating, and the very disciples of English liberalism were going to put themselves at the head of this movement. The National Congress was founded with the object of ventilating 'popular grievances' and formulating 'national aspiration'—in other words, to forward the grievances of the intellectuals who craved for higher positions, and the aspirations of the capitalist-class to enter the industrial field. But the real sponsors of the Congress were not Indian nationalists, conscious of the full significance of what they were initiating, but a few patriotic English liberals, who were disturbed by the ominous clouds gathering in the political sky. The unfilled aspirations of the young intellectuals, backed by the nascent capitalist-class,

could be very well expected to turn into dissatisfaction, which might lead to developments more dangerous when too late to control the situations. A retired British official A. O. Hume, of Gladstonian creed, who is called the Father of the Indian National Congress, called the attention of the government to the unrest of the 'masses' of India caused by the increasing alienation of the educated natives from the administration of the country. In helping the young liberal intellectuals organize the National Congress, Hume expected to provide them with a glittering toy so that they could be kept out of harm's length. He seemed to have impressed on the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, the policy of conferring on the Congress the official benediction, with the object of making it assume the rôle of 'Her Majesty's Opposition' at home. But one cannot conspire against history. Social forces cannot be deceived, not even by the cleverness of imperial liberalism. Subjectively disciples and admirers of British constitutionalism, the Indian intellectuals objectively were the defenders of the interests of the rising native bourgeoisie, the standard-bearers of nationalism. Therefore it was not long before the Indian followers of John Bright turned traitors to their political preceptors and became rank protectionists.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was celebrated in Bombay (1885), which was then the main industrial centre of the country, under the presidency of W. C. Bonnerjee, a prosperous lawyer. The tame character of the first Congress can be well judged from the fact that the English governor of the Province was requested to take the chair, and that it emphatically declared its loyalty to the Crown. The principal resolutions contained the demand for the appointment of a Royal Commission on which the 'people of India' should be represented, to enquire into the composition of public services, and the request for the expansion of the Legislative Council. So it is evident that it was only the grievances and claims of the intelligentsia which the Congress consciously focused. The economic interests of the bourgeoisie still remained an unseen force behind the scene.

But it was not long before the Congress took such a turn that its official and semi-official patrons had to lament their judgement. It was soon looked upon as a seditious body trying to create disaffection; because in spite of the protestations of loyalty to British rule, it demanded the recognition of the 'living forces of elective principles' which, it contended, could not be realized without 'representative institutions'. The government of India made some efforts to retain the loyal support of the intelligentsia. The Local Government Act of 1888 made some concession in the municipal administration and the India Councils Act passed by the British Parliament in 1892, declared that the Government of India should rely more on the experience and advice of responsible Indians. These were evidently attempts to convince the Congress that the British Government was not a negation of the principles of democracy. But the political consciousness of the Indian liberal intellectual had outgrown the stage of apprenticeship. The demand was 'not for Consultative Councils, but for representative institutions'.

Although it represented the interests and expressed the grievances of the most advanced section of the Indian people, politically the Congress retained its reformist tendency. Education, constitutional convictions and above all, instinctive class-affiliation prevented the Congress leaders from questioning the 'benefits' of British rule. All they desired was that the government should become representative by including them in its organism. They could not possibly conceive of the idea of national independence, because their social position did not enable them to go to such an extent. Administrative reform to be achieved by constitutional means, therefore, remained their programme. The political ideal of the Congress in its earlier years is best typified in the following quotation from the speech made at its second annual session in 1886 by Madan Mohan Malaviya, today a radical nationalist, demanding nothing less than complete self-government:

"It is not to the great British government that we should demonstrate the utility, the expediency, the necessity of

representative institutions; it is surely unnecessary to say one word in support of such a cause to the British nation—the descendants of these great and brave men who fought and died to obtain for themselves, and preserve intact for their children, these very institutions, which, taught by their example, we now crave. What is an Englishman without representative institutions? Why, not an Englishman at all, a mere sham, a base imitation, and I often wonder, when I look around our nominally English magnates, how they have the face to call themselves Englishmen, and yet deny us representative institutions, and struggle to maintain despotic ones. Representative institutions are as much a part of the true Briton as his language and literature."

This passionate admiration was, indeed, not for the British government as such, neither did it signify 'de-nationalization', because the man who pronounced the words is still a partisan of Hindu culture and has been one all through his long public career. It was fomented by the spontaneous enthusiasm for certain ideals held sacred by the liberal bourgeoisie of all countries. Democratic government is the political reflex of bourgeois society. Therefore it was but natural that the pioneers of the Indian bourgeoisie would hail enthusiastically the doctrines of democracy. In its earlier years, the ideal of the Congress was not a national government, but a democratic government, by which was meant that the civil administration of the country should be entrusted to the liberal intellectuals—the forebears of a new social order.

The political reformism of the Congress was unavoidable. Its leaders were pioneers of a national renaissance. They dreamt of an Indian marching in the path of social progress and economic evolution under the guidance of a government infused with the spirit of bourgeois liberalism. To them, absence of British rule signified the active revival of the forces of reaction in every aspect of life, political, social and religious. Therefore radical nationalism, having for its object the subversion of the British domination, could not be the

programme of the Congress, not only because it was an impossibility, but such an idea could not be entertained by the liberal intellectuals. Radical or extremist nationalism in those days, could not but be based on reactionary forces, whose success would entail a political retrogression to a monarchical state and the reinforcement of social and religious conservatism which such a political set-back would surely bring about. The forces which would make for the overthrow of the foreign bourgeoisie without at the same time threatening a social reaction, were yet in the process of evolution. The political reformism of the Congress was augmented by these revolutionary forces accumulating behind the scene. Revolutionary nationalism—nationalism which does not stand for social and political reaction—could not be evolved before the liberal bourgeoisie had acquired sufficient strength. The national liberation of India, which would put her people on the road to moral and material progress, is not to be realized by political movements with orthodox reactionary ideology. This is the mission of the progressive bourgeoisie, and those spiritual pioneers of the rising progressive bourgeoisie, the liberal intellectuals assembled in the first sessions of the National Congress, heralded the birth of a new India. Historically they were revolutionaries. They rebelled against two mighty forces, namely, those of social conservatism and religious superstition still dominating the Indian society, and the absolute political monopoly exercised by the foreign bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary role of these men becomes more apparent when we turn to their social tendencies. A man of the type of Mahadev Govind Ranade, whose patriotism has always been unimpeachable and whose personality stands as a landmark of the political renaissance of India, worked with the firm conviction that the progress of the Indian people depended on a radical readjustment. The patriotism of Ranade and his co-workers was revolutionary, in as much as it recognized the banefulness of the old religious corruptions and social customs and boldly declared war on them. It would be a serious

mistake to call those brave men servile imitators, an epithet often ascribed to them by the adherents of orthodox nationalism, which originated as a reaction against the social radicalism of the Congress. If the fathers of the Congress devoted more time and energy to the discussion of social questions than to the agitation for a popular franchise, it was because they were the embodiment of a revolutionary force which was eating into the vitals of the old order, doomed to destruction. By bravely condemning the old they voiced the judgement of history, and indicated that the forces of native reaction were more detrimental to popular progress than the political domination of a foreign bourgeoisie. Based on social foundations of a higher order, the British power was not to be shaken till the people of India would be stirred up by progressive ideals. New social relations bring about new political institutions. This law determined the psychology of the Indian intellectuals. A national state conducive to the growth of the bourgeoisie could not be expected to be built on the foundation of a social organism still greatly dominated by feudal traditions, patriarchal conservatism and religious superstition. These obstacles must be removed before India could be reborn to a new life. By declaring their desire to struggle on against time honoured customs and institutions, these men proved themselves to be the vanguard of a social revolution to be carried through, not by the reformistic measures advocated by them, but by the imminent rise of the native bourgeoisie as the leader of the new society.

In its earlier days the social significance of the Congress outweighed its political role. Its programme of social reform was not actuated, as is generally believed, by the 'de-nationalizing' Western education of its leaders. None but a rank jingoist discriminates against knowledge on racial or national grounds. In course of its continuous evolution, the human race passes through various stages, which are everywhere marked by corresponding social ideologies and institutions. The simple accident of being born in diverse countries does not make of the various human communities isolated units, with different

paths marked out for each. To discriminate against certain branches and kinds of human knowledge as outlandish and therefore to be looked upon with suspicion and as injurious is not a sign of healthy nationalism. One must not be ashamed to learn from the others when necessary. The period in which the European people made great progress in political, social, economic and cultural fields, saw India infested with civil wars and thus unable to keep pace with the modern world. Foreign conquest kept her in stagnation another hundred years. Consequently it was but natural that, in the scale of material civilization the people of India lagged behind. Not to recognize this historical fact and to sublimate this backwardness by clothing it in the glorious garb of a 'spiritual' civilization is the effort of reactionary forces. The so-called 'aggressive' nationalism, which refuses to learn anything from others and hugs the old traditions, is a questionable phenomenon, as it tends to prefer ignorance to knowledge.

The ideals of bourgeois society and the doctrines of a democratic state, which are the foundation of the material civilization of the modern world, happened first to be evolved by the European people. Left alone and uninterfered with by foreign conquest, India would have evolved political and social ideals of a similar nature. Because these are not the outcome of a particular European civilization, but are realized by every human community at a particular stage of economic progress. Foreign domination had been harmful to the Indian people chiefly because it prevented their development and deprived them of the full benefit of these modern thoughts and institutions. If the foreigner could continue to dominate over India, it was because there did not exist in her population an element which tended to break down the old, in order to build a new social and political structure. The fact that the Indian intellectuals responded to the European social and political thoughts did not by any means betray slavishness; on the contrary, it proved that they were objectively revolutionary. Because these thoughts were not European—a monopoly of the so-called Western

peoples—they were progressive ideals, and any one who would respond to them must have reached a stage of material development which spontaneously gives origin to such tendencies. Therefore Western education, instead of being a denationalizing factor, caused a national renaissance.

From the very beginning the Congress did not raise the standard of political revolution, but it did lay down the foundation on which the political nationalism of India was built subsequently. The demand for representative government challenged the right of the British rule in India, and established the theory that in the people was vested the sovereign authority. This was indeed a new departure in the political history of India. It not only questioned the legitimacy of the benevolent dictatorship of the British, but also signified opposition to that school of nationalism which in the name of freedom, would revive backward political institutions under native rulers. The programme of the Congress remained one of 'nation-building' till Tilak swept it with his doctrine of 'integral nationalism' in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Tilak's was a revolt more against the ideology and tactics of the Old Guard of the Congress than against Government. His theory was that the nationalism of India should be nourished with the native traditions, and that the nationhood of the Indian people was an accomplished fact in view of their religio-cultural unity. We will deal with this phase of nationalism later on.

The Congress assumed the title 'national' as if the bourgeoisie whom it represented, was ordained providentially to be the custodian of the popular welfare. The small number of government officials, merchants, manufacturers, progressive landlords and intellectual liberals, constituting it, believed themselves to be natural and legitimate representatives of the inarticulate masses. The grievances of the office-seeking intellectuals were put forth as those of the people. The ambitions of the native capitalist class were identified with the right of the nation. In the Congress were crystallized and through it were expressed the social ideals and political aspirations of an element of the people, which in spite of its



numerical smallness, was intellectually competent and materially fitted to advocate the theory that India was a national unit and as such, should have the rights and dignities of one. To this element, nationhood was a political conception, and the national right of a people was to be asserted in the domain of material progress. The struggle against foreign rule was, therefore, only insofar as it stood in the way of those sections of the people which were consciously feeling the urge of material advancement. This discontented class began to fight for its own benefit, but in order to prove that the foreign government was in the wrong, it must talk of national interest and popular representation. Thus the modern nationalism of India was based on the economic interest of the native bourgeoisie, and the programme of securing the needed protection for the latter's development as a potential factor in social-economics, was taken for that of nation-building.

The programme of social reform which had been given precedence over political demands in the first sessions of the Congress, was gradually abandoned. This was not because the men assembled therein had lost their radicalism on social questions, but because it began to dawn upon them that the old customs and traditions could not be shaken until material conditions helpful to their preservation, were changed. Or, in other words, they instinctively felt that until and unless the economic basis of Indian society was revolutionized, no radical change could be introduced in the social domain of the past and adoration of the golden future. For example, the caste system, which was a legitimate object of assault, could not be abolished by legislation, nor by agitation. Higher means of production, based on new property relations had to be evolved before it could be uprooted. Even such a programme as the 'uplift of the depressed classes' could not be realized, because educational facilities were not available from the foreign government and the native bourgeoisie was not in a position to tackle the problem without the backing of the state. Indian society could be freed from the galling bondage of religious superstitions only by the dissemination

of scientific knowledge ; but the foreign government would be safely seated in power only so long as the people could be kept in ignorance. Therefore public education, one of the boons of the bourgeois state, was withheld determinedly, and the liberal reformers with all their sincere zeal, could not do anything worthwhile to dissipate the ignorance of the people. Its enthusiastic programme of social reform having been thus rendered futile and not to be realized, under the contemporary economic and political conditions, the Congress became a purely political body, given to the struggle for administrative and fiscal reforms. Its demand was to 'Indianize' the public services by giving more employment to the native intellectual, and protection to the nascent indigenous industrial enterprises.

If the Indian adepts of English liberalism dared question the justice and beneficence of the doctrine of Free Trade, it was not that their faith in the bourgeois political philosophy had in any way been shaken, but because of the growth of an economic force which stood behind and determined their political ideology and activities. The modernized middle-class, led by the liberal intelligentsia had entered the political arena. But its political struggle would remain impotent till sufficient economic power was acquired. Therefore the slogan of the national movement was the 'development of home industries', which meant the strengthening of the native capitalist class. The political nationalism inaugurated by the Congress thus promised to become a bitter struggle between the two capitalist classes—the native and the imperialist. The former sanctified its cause by christening it 'national', while the latter claimed to be ruling India for the welfare of her people. The struggle between the two elements of the same social character, however, could not break out into open hostility owing to the fact that one controlled the state power of a mighty capitalist empire, while the other was still in its infancy economically, and socially, its leadership of and oppressed nation was but theoretical. It did not make any difference to the masses of the people,

unquestionably oppressed by foreign capitalism, by whom they were exploited. National consciousness in the political sense, awakened in the bourgeoisie, was not to be found in the people. Under such circumstances, the struggle could not be anything but 'legal' and 'constitutional', as the Congress termed its agitation.

The aspirations of the intellectual and propertied middle-class were pressed with all the sanction of the precepts learned from English political seers. The tactics seemed to be to beat the British bourgeoisie with its own arguments. But already in the closing years of the century not much illusion was left. Newspapers voicing the sentiment of the Congress wrote in this strain: "As there can be no revival of the Indian industry without some displacement of British industry, we understand the difficulty of ruling India for the people of India." With the growth of this spirit of mistrust in the liberalism of the English bourgeoisie was brought to a close the first period of the modern political movement, which unquestionably laid the theoretical foundation of the struggle for national liberation, but did not exceed the bounds of constitutional agitation for democracy.

The period that followed was apparently more revolutionary, because its guiding principle was a challenge to the authority of a foreign power ruling another nation. Even the possibility of recognizing this authority, when democratized by including the available native element in it, was not admitted. But in socio-political significance this new phase was less revolutionary than the former, because its theory of 'integral nationalism' when put to practice would push the country into a backward stage of development in spite of national independence. Youthful impatience and unseen forces of reactionary conservatism, brought about the apparently revolutionary violent outbursts which were the characteristics of this phase of the movement. And in these very causes lay its inherent weakness. But its unmixed influence was but of short duration, because in order to be potential, the interests of the rising industrial capital had to be made the motive force of

the movement, which nevertheless, retained its orthodox and religious phraseology.

The new movement was not only a reaction against the political impotency of the Congress, fundamentally it embodied the revolt of the spirit of orthodoxy and conservatism against the social radicalism of the prominent Congress leaders, particularly of Ranade and Telang. Himself a young intellectual, educated according to the so-called de-nationalizing Western methods, and a disciple of Ranade, the leader of the new movement was Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who started his career as an enthusiastic worker in the field of social and educational reform. In the nineties, tendencies of religious reform were being expressed as if to counteract the wave of radicalism headed by the modernized form in the Arya Samaj in the north and the Ramakrishna Mission in Bengal. The object was the rejuvenation of the teachings of Hinduism in order to make them compatible with the psychology created by modern education. But in fact, it was the resistance of the forces of conservatism and reaction trying to adapt themselves to the new environments. The glaring social corruptions and stifling religious superstitions could not be overlooked, even by the stoutest admirers of the spiritual civilization of the Aryans. The best that could be done and was done by those elements, which constituted the bulwark of the old, was to lay the blame on the degeneration brought about by time. The pristine purity of the original doctrines was vigorously upheld. And a national revival was advocated with the slogan of 'back to the Vedas' which even in the present moment finds an apostle in Gandhi. The new movement headed by Tilak perhaps unconsciously transplanted into the political field this tendency of looking backward, in order to find inspiration for a forward march.

The advanced social views of its leaders had naturally kept the activities of the Congress confined within a narrow circle of rich intellectuals and liberal bourgeoisie. The great majority of the population was left entirely outside its influence. The material and intellectual condition of the

masses had not changed in the response of the political postulates and the social radicalism of the men assembled in the Con-gress, which, therefore, failed to enlist any large following. The far-sightedness of its constructive programme was not understood by the youthful elements, which had more reason to be dissatisfied with the British government. There was great unemployment among the lower middle-class to which these youthful elements belonged. They were mostly students, many more of whom were annually graduating from the schools and universities than could be absorbed in the government services or the liberal professions open to them. The students in the colleges looked ahead in their life and found all roads to prosperity and distinction blocked. New education, new environments of the modern cities had aroused new ideas, new aspirations in them. Economic desperation drove them to an extreme, one way or the other. The majority succumbed in the struggle, turning into semi-proletarianized petty intellectuals submerged in degenerating apathy, devoid of all social and political vision. A small number rebelled. But not having considerable incomes from government service, or profitable professions, or trade or industry or landed property or several of them combined, as was the case with the members of the Congress, the rebellious elements of the lower middle-class found no consolation in the idle deliberations and programme of gradual reform of the Congress. They wanted to have an immediate change and a radical one at that. Constitutionalism did not appeal to them. They were driven to violence which, however, proved futile to lead them anywhere.

The dissatisfied members of the lower middle-class jeered at the Congress, because the redress of their grievances was not included in its programme, which advocated the interests only of those who were already in a relatively better position than themselves. It demanded more positions for those who were already well posted in comparison with the lower middle-class youths, whose university degrees hardly enabled them to keep starvation off their doorsteps. The

demand for protection of the native industries was calculated to help the rich become richer. In short, the petty bourgeoisie found itself left out of the scheme of national advancement put forth by the rich intellectuals and capitalists assembled in the Congress, which, however, had repeatedly held British exploitation responsible for the economic backwardness and bankruptcy of the Indian people. Having learned from the Congress leaders that foreign exploitation was the root of all the economic suffering of the people, the lower middle-class youths revolted against the tactics of their political preceptors. The rational economic theory of the Congress that India was poor because she was kept in an agrarian stage in an industrial age, was not appreciated by the impatient youths, who argued that nothing could be achieved unless political autonomy was realized and that it was not to be gained by prayer and petitions. As leader of this point of view, Tilak vigorously assailed what he called the 'piece-meal' policy of the Congress, and put forward his programme of 'integral nationalism' which meant to say that the nationhood of the Indian people was an historically accomplished fact, and that its right to self-government was not conditional upon any preliminary evolution, either social or economic. This challenge to the older leaders rallied the discontented and rebellious lower middle-class youths around Tilak.

But to have condemned the old policy as impotent was not enough. It still remained for Tilak and his followers to find the force with which their 'integral nationalism' could be rendered more effective. If the old leaders had failed to make the Indian people appreciate the philosophies of Bentham and Mills, neither could the 'Duties of Man' as depicted by Mazzini nor the 'Social Contract' of Jean Jacques Rousseau make any better impression, the patriotic efforts of Tilak notwithstanding. The people of India, excepting the small circles of the middle-class, were not materially fitted to respond to one or the other. The forces that could unite them in a fight for political independence had not yet fully developed. In the

bourgeoisie was to be found the force, but the bourgeoisie could not be politically powerful until it should have reached a certain stage of economic advancement. By advocating the growth of the bourgeoisie, the Congress stood at the vanguard of the objectively revolutionary force. The theory of nationalism expressed in the person and preachings of Tilak, ignored the social law that political nationalism in modern times could not exist without an economic foundation. The task of creating a modern nation out of a people in a backward stage of social progress belongs to the middle-class, which under normal conditions, leads the struggle against feudal autocracy. In India this struggle happened to be against a foreign ruler which had largely destroyed feudalism as a factor of social economics, but the exploitation of imperialist capital had prevented the people from outgrowing the social and economic order that prevails under patriarchy and feudalism. However, divested of idealistic verbiage, both the socio-political formulas, namely, Liberation from Serfdom and National Independence, make for the economic aggrandizement of the middle-class. In the first case, the evolution of higher means of production necessitates the mobilization of wage-earners freed from the feudal yoke, in order that they can sell their labour-power in the open market of capitalist competition; and the second signifies the installation of the native bourgeoisie in the political power so that it can carry on freely the exploitation of the manpower and the natural resources of the nation. Therefore the political nationhood of a people is conditional upon the rise of the bourgeoisie; and the economic evolution which makes the bourgeoisie a paramount factor in the society, destroys all old social institutions of a feudal and patriarchal character.

Indian nationalism, indifferent to or scornful of the steps necessary for the development of the bourgeoisie, was, therefore, not more revolutionary; but was actuated by forces of social and religious reaction against the progressive tendencies of the Congress, which focused the ideology of the coming society. The reactionary forces contributing to the

doctrines of 'integral nationalism' stood revealed, when Tilak declared that Indian nationalism could not be purely secular, that it must be based on Hindu orthodoxy. In its earlier days, orthodox nationalism assailed the Congress more for its social radicalism and religious heresy than for its reformistic political programme. A national independence, which would push Indian society back to Hindu orthodoxy, was indeed not a very revolutionary ideal. If material welfare should be sacrificed for things spiritual, then why should the people be asked to fight for political independence which, after all, is a secular matter? Hindu religion had not been violated by the British conquerors; so it was not necessary to defend it. On the contrary, the British government had always been very anxious to insure the perpetuation of the religious superstitions and beliefs which kept the people in blissful ignorance, resigned to their lot however hard, as ordained by a superhuman power. Advocates of Hindu orthodoxy consciously or unconsciously desired to keep the people in the darkness of ignorance and submission.

When we remember that Tilak parted ways with his preceptor on account of the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, the social tendencies behind his political theories become palpable. His fierce and bold criticism of the Bill, brought him before the public eye as a stout defender of Hindu orthodoxy. The Age of Consent Bill proposed to increase the age limit to twelve instead of ten when a girl's consent to her marriage would be legally valid. Being intended for reforming the custom of child marriage, which had given origin to unspeakable abuses, this measure enlisted the sympathy and support of the liberal intellectuals of the Congress. Tilak's argument was that the foreign government should not be allowed to interfere in the social institutions. He entered the political arena as the champion of orthodox nationalism as against the 'de-nationalizing patriotism' of the Congress leaders, and sought to unite the people in a fight for the defence of national religion and culture. He put forward the theory of 'integral nationalism' because the



evolutionary nationalism of the Congress was calculated to disrupt the national life. He demanded that on the strength of her old glories and traditions, India should have self-government at once in order that her national heritage of religious orthodoxy, social conservatism and patient resignation to earthly suffering for the sake of spiritual uplift, might not be defiled by the rise of a progressive social force.

The movement of national renaissance inaugurated by the Congress, which in its earlier years was but the spiritual reflection of the social forces most revolutionary at that period, threatened to be more destructive to the reactionary elements than had been the British Government. The constitutional democracy or evolutionary nationalism advocated by the liberal bourgeoisie led by the intellectuals, spelled doom to the old social heritage and religious orthodoxy. Orthodox nationalism was and still is more of a spontaneous reaction of the moribund old order against this progressive force, than a revolutionary struggle against foreign rule. In fact, the British government had always been rather friendly disposed towards the reactionary forces as expressed by religious orthodoxy and social conservatism, and those elements of the population which actively focused these reactionary tendencies had always been the mainstay of the foreign domination. The British government, in spite of being a bourgeois institution, patronized the reactionary tendencies because by keeping the people ignorant on the pretext of spiritual uplift, these proved themselves greatly helpful to the former. The memorable *Queen's Proclamation* of 1858 and other protestations made solemnly on various occasions, assured the native reactionary forces of a free hand in the field of social and religious exploitation. This being the case, it is to be deduced that orthodox nationalism, which sought for political power in order to preserve the ancient culture and save the purity of religion, was a revolt primarily against the native forces making for the disruption of these cherished treasures of the past. And these revolutionary forces were crystallizing in the Congress under

radical leaders, whose programme was not to revive the India of the Rishis (patriarchal sages) with its contented handicraft workers saturated with ignorance and doped in the name of religion, but to build a new society on the ruins of the old. Orthodox nationalism, in the social sense, was the resistance of the forces of reaction against the ominous radicalism of the 'de-nationalized' intellectuals who led the Congress. The same force, whose military explosion was the Mutiny of 1857, could be discovered behind the political theories of the orthodox nationalism of half a century later.

*National Social Conferences had been held annually ever since 1887, in spite of the opposition of the conservative elements which found their way into the Congress. The growth of orthodox nationalism strengthened the latter, whose point of view on the question of social reform was thus formulated in the Congress of 1895 :*

"The *raison d'être* for excluding social question from the deliberations of the Congress, is that if it were to take up such question, it might lead to serious differences, ultimately culminating in a schism, and it is a matter of first importance to avoid a split."

The position of the radicals, on the other hand, was put forth by their leader Ranade, who held that the political movement of a people could not be separated from its social problems. In 1900, Ranade said: "You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political right, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based upon reason and justice." Here is raised the sanctimonious voice of a petty bourgeois moralist. The intricate social problems of India, with their roots struck deep in the traditions of the hoary past, could not be solved by the reformism of a moralist. But the 'reason and justice' of a bourgeois intellectual, whose sincerity, by the way, is not to be questioned, were not hollow words. They were based upon an imperious force which would bring about in time a new society based upon a new code of ethics. They meant to say "you cannot make the

people at large a conscious political unit so long as you are for keeping learning a monopoly of the Brahmin oligarchy; you cannot unite the people in a struggle for political advancement so long as you tell them to sacrifice material things for a spiritual life; you cannot make the people fight for national independence or democratic government, which will put you in power, unless you tell them that the future will be better than the present; you cannot expect the people to move forward carrying you to power on their shoulders, unless you free them from the influences of feudal and patriarchal customs, which are hostile to the modern political concepts.' These words meant all this and many more revolutionary doctrines preached by the bourgeoisie of all countries in a particular stage of social development. It is nevertheless true that society based on the 'reason and justice' of the bourgeois libertarians does not end, but intensifies the exploitation of the majority by the minority. Only then does it become naked, shorn of all the religious and spiritual hypocrisies which kept the people ignorant, resigned to their slavery. In bourgeois society, the sting of exploitation is felt by the masses directly and the reaction against it is eventually provoked. That is, the people consciously begin their march on the road to progress and emancipation. The justice and reason of a bourgeois libertarian are the spiritual expression of a rising social force, which breaks up the decayed and stifling old order and plunges society into a bitter struggle which exacts torrents of tears and rivers of blood. Patient suffering comes to an end, and the stagnation of the ignorant becomes a struggle of the awakened. This is a movement forward, and the radical nationalism of the Congress stood, though unconsciously, for this revolutionary forward movement. Consequently, it was a sworn enemy of the forces of reaction, still strong under the fostering care of the British government. Orthodox nationalism was the political outburst of these dying forces of reaction.

The problematical realization of the programme of 'aggressive nationalism' depended on the political potentiality

of these forces of reaction and conservatism. The aggressive exponents of orthodox nationalism, including Tilak himself, invoked the teachings of the Hindu scriptures and philosophy to serve the purpose of a modern political movement. It was an impossible task fraught with grave danger. For example, the Anti-Cow-Killing Society, founded by Tilak obviously as an instrument of political agitation, soon degenerated, as was to be expected, into an organ of extreme religious orthodoxy. He delved into history to find inspiration for the present and thought to produce a magnetic charm in the personality of the Maratha hero Shivaji. Festivals to celebrate Shivaji's birthday were organized and stirring speeches were made in the name of religion, which was supposed to be defiled by the foreign rule. The orthodox spirit of 'aggressive nationalism' crystallized in the formation of such organizations as the "Society for the removal of obstacles to Hindu religion." The very name speaks for the nature and social tendency of such organizations.

Orthodox nationalism, however, remained impotent in the field of practical politics. It thrived in the secret revolutionary societies composed of small number of discontented middle-class youths. Orthodox nationalism, which rallies all the forces of reaction under its banner, may temporarily appeal to the imagination of the ignorant people, but never can be of any permanent strength. Because the national liberation of a people from capitalist domination, such as the British government is, can be achieved only by the development of progressive forces objectively revolutionary. Modern political nationalism is a progressive movement, therefore its motive force cannot be found in religious orthodoxy and social conservatism. This social law was vindicated when the orthodox element in the national movement, subsequently organized as the Extremist wing of the Congress, had to take the cue from the evolutionary radical leaders on the stage of pragmatic politics.

In spite of its orthodoxy and the desire for reviving the golden days of yore, the Extremist Party became a political

force only when it came to the conclusion that the real fight had to take place on the economic field. Aggressive nationalists proved themselves more revolutionary than the old constitutionalist leaders when their aggressiveness was brought to bear upon the tactics, not of social reform, but of the best and most effective way to foment the growth of the native bourgeoisie. It criticized those who believed that the government would ever concede protection to Indian industries. Swadeshi (to encourage the use of indigenous articles) and boycott of foreign goods were put forward as the best means of helping the development of national industries. The evolutionary radicals, who were called Moderates, accepted the programme of Swadeshi and boycott which, however, proved to be premature in practice.

This doubtful tactical triumph of the Extremists was gained when they recognized the necessity of giving predominance to material questions. By adopting the programme of Swadeshi and boycott they repudiated their own principles and abandoned their original orthodox ideal. Because these measures were resorted to with the object of helping the growth of native industries, that is, for strengthening the national bourgeoisie, which by its very nature, was an irreconcilable enemy of the old traditions and established social institutions based on orthodoxy. The prospective rise of a modern bourgeoisie heralded such a revolution in the economic foundation of Indian society, that the national heritage of spiritual culture and religious beliefs, the defence and glorification of which was the motive force of orthodox nationalism, would become untenable. The reborn Indian nation would outgrow them, and its fight would be for progress still further ahead.

The political ascendancy of the Extremist Party forced the National Congress to adopt the programme of Swadeshi in its twenty-first session held at Benares (1906), and of boycotting British goods the next year. The triumph was the more remarkable because the Congress gave up its former policy of view under the presidency of two of its most outstanding veterans, who had been staunch believers in constitutionalism

and evolutionary progress both in the economic and political fields. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the great political opponent of Tilak, launched the programme of Swadeshi, which had already been adopted in Calcutta under the leadership of Bepin Chandra Pal, as an answer to the partition of the Province of Bengal. So long as orthodox nationalism had desired to prove itself more revolutionary by its religious fervour and social conservatism, the Maratha country in the Province of Bombay remained its stronghold, and Tilak its great expounder. But its political strength, expressed in the form of the Extremist Party, was first felt in the Province of Bengal under the leadership of Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose, both of whom were men of modern education and keen intellect. •

It had been long since the British government looked for some pretext in order to nullify the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, which had created and perpetuated a rich landholding class. The necessity for having such a privileged class, to the detriment of the public exchequer, had ceased to exist. The government of Lord Curzon divided the Province of Bengal into two parts in 1905. The object was twofold. First to nullify the Permanent Settlement and second, to foment ill-feeling between the Hindus and the Mohammedans. The first object was to be achieved by ordering a new settlement of land in both the new provinces, which were so constituted territorially as to include areas Regulated and Non-regulated under the Permanent Settlement. The second object was to be realized by creating an overwhelming Hindu majority in one and a Muslim majority in the other province. Such a distribution of the population would enable the government to play one community against the other, on the pretext of protecting the minority.

Religious nationalism of the orthodox as well as reformed school had begun to come into evidence in the province of Bengal since the first years of the twentieth century. Although its political philosopher and leader were found subsequently in the persons of Aurobindo Ghose and Bepin Chandra Pal respectively, its fundamental ideology was

conceived by a young intellectual of petty bourgeois origin. He was Narendra Nath Dutta, subsequently known as Swami Vivekananda—the sanyasi name he adopted. While still a student in the University of Calcutta, Dutta felt the rebellious spirit affecting the lower middle-class intellectuals. It was in the early nineties. He was moved by the sufferings of the common people. De-classed socially, possessing a keen intellect, he made a spectacular plunge into the philosophical depths of Hindu scripture and discovered in his cult of Vedantism (religious Monism of the Hindus) a sort of socialistic humanitarian religion. He decried scathingly orthodoxy in religion as well as in social customs. He was the picturesque, and tremendously vigorous embodiment of the old trying to readjust itself to the new. Like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Dutta was also a prophet of Hindu nationalism. He also was a firm believer in the cultural superiority of the Indian people, and held that on this cultural basis should be built the future Indian nation. But he was not a partisan of orthodoxy in religion : to social conservatism, he was a veritable iconoclast. He had the courageous foresight, or perhaps instinct, which convinced him that if religion was to be saved, it must be given a modern garb; if the priest was still to hold his way over the millions of Hindu believers, he must modify his old crude ways; if the intellectual aristocracy of the fortunate few was to retain its social predominance, spiritual knowledge must be democratized. The reaction of native culture against the intrusion of Western education ran wild, so to say, in the person of Vivekananda and the cult of Universal Religion he formulated in the name of his preceptor, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He preached that Hinduism, not Indian nationalism, should be aggressive. His nationalism was a spiritual imperialism. He called on young India to believe in the spiritual mission of India. The following quotation from his voluminous writings and speeches can be taken as the fundamentals of his philosophy, on which was subsequently built the orthodox nationalism of the de-classed young intellectuals, organized into secret societies

advocating violence and terrorism for the overthrow of British rule, Vivekananda said :

“Materialism and all its miseries cannot be conquered by materialism. Armies, when they attempt to conquer armies, only multiply and make brutes of humanity.....Spirituality must conquer the West. Now is the time to work for India's spiritual ideals penetrating deep into the West. We must go out. We must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. We must do it or die. The condition of Indian national life, of unashamed and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.”

This romantic vision of conquering the world by spiritual superiority electrified the young intellectuals, whose desperate economic position made them restive. Victims of the existing order, they were rebelling against it and would destroy it, if possible. The British domination stood in the way as the root of all evils. Thus, an intelligently rebellious element, which otherwise would have been the vanguard of the exploited class in a social struggle, had to give into national pre-occupations, and contribute itself to a movement for the immediate overthrow of foreign rule, not for progress forward, but in order to go back to an imaginary golden age—the fountain-head of India's spiritual heritage. This youthful band of rebels fanatically believing in the spiritual mission of their Motherland, embodied in themselves the clash of two forces; that of Reaction inducing them to put their nationalism on a religious basis, to hoist the banner of so-called ‘aggressive nationalism’ which proposed to put up a determined resistance to the menace of materialism in order to preserve the assumed superiority of their spiritual heritage; and that of Revolution, driving them to political nihilism, together with tendencies towards religious or utopian socialism without, however, any appreciation of the laws of social progress. In their religiousness and wild spiritual imperialism, they embodied the reactionary social forces. Their no less sincere and ardent desire, on the other hand, to educate the people, to improve the latter's conditions, to revive the golden



age unsullied by the vices of the existing system, were generated by the objectively revolutionary forces heralding a coming social struggle. Despite the apparent predominance of their religious tendencies in the ideological domain, it was the latter spirit of revolt, generated as it was by a powerful material cause, which really determined their activities and made them a power behind the Extremist Party. But the de-classed character of the members of these secret revolutionary societies becomes clear when we see them pay but little attention to the programme of the Congress, which, whether under the leadership of the Moderates or Extremists, advocated the interests of the bourgeoisie. Their de-classed character enabled them to avoid falling helpless victims to the reactionary tendencies running through them. Revolutionary forces expressed through them got the upper hand.

The revolutionary idealism of the secret societies was sumptuously fed with suitable interpretations of the Hindu scriptures. Agressive nationalism must be self-sufficient. It must exclude the necessity of outside inspiration for its development. Therefore, the ideology of a modern political movement had to be drawn from the fountain of national philosophy. Complete national independence, which was its ideal, was to be more of a spiritual uplift than political progress. The philosopher of aggressive nationalism, Aurobindo Ghosh—he who adapted the teachings of Vivekananda to political purposes—said, “Achievement of Swaraj (self-government) will develop Indian spirituality.” On another occasion he declared : “British rule and Western civilization for which it stands, threaten the very life of Hinduism.” Thus the ideal of aggressive nationalism could not be realized, unless foreign domination was overthrown. And for the destruction of foreign domination, all sorts of foreign means were welcome. For example, the spiritual idealists resorted to bombs and dynamite and pistols and this practice was justified by rulings from the scriptures.

The partition of Bengal brought a new element into the anti-British movement. It was the landholding class, which had

so far been the most loyal support of the government. But the partition threatened to injure the privileged position of the landed aristocracy, whose traditional loyalty was thus tampered with. The agitation against the Partition brought the aggressive nationalists led by Bepin Chandra Pal, into political prominence. Bombs and dynamite were supplemented by the programme of fomenting national industries by means of Swadeshi and boycott. It was argued by those who came to be known as the Extremist Party that nothing could be secured by petitioning which, they held, had been the tactical principle of the Congress so far. Demands must be made, and means should be devised to back the demands. Thus the Extremist Party, in spite of its ideals of spiritual nationalism, materialized itself on a political platform, which was ratified by the Twenty-second Congress held in Calcutta (1907) under the presidency of the veteran constitutional democrat, Dadabhai Naoroji, who not only approved the fighting programme of Swadeshi and boycott, but declared that the ideal of the Indian National Congress was Swaraj, that is self-government.

The cause of this change in the policy of the Congress is not to be looked for in the apparent vigorousness of the orthodoxy which characterized the youthful revolutionaries standing behind the Extremist Party. It was not the spiritual nationalism of the orthodox that proved itself more revolutionary, and consequently more powerful, than the 'de-nationalized' patriotism of the Congress. On the contrary, it was the material forces of revolution which proved triumphant over the reaction clothed in orthodoxy. Three material factors contributed to the victory of the Extremist Party : (1) The still slow but steady development of native industrial capital. (2) The discontent created by growing unemployment among the lower middle-class youths. (3) The disaffection of the landed aristocracy, whose privileged position was threatened by the partition of Bengal. If the Congress abandoned its former tactics of seeking government protection for the development of native industries, it was not that its old leaders had turned orthodox nationalists. They still believed that the national

regeneration of India was conditional upon the rise of a modern bourgeoisie. The programme of Swadeshi and boycott was intended for the advancement of national industries. In 1905 the Congress adopted this programme because it perceived the rise of those forces which heralded the advent of a new industrial India.

The adoption of the programme of Swadeshi and boycott did not signify the defeat of the progressive liberals; on the contrary, it vindicated their social tendency, which was objectively revolutionary. It was the orthodox nationalism which was vanquished, because by subscribing to the programme of industrial development, it practically surrendered its fundamental principles. It tacitly admitted that it was not the old spiritual heritage, but a modern bourgeoisie with a materialistic philosophy, that was going to save India as a nation. In moving the resolution on the poverty of the Indian people in the Benares Congress of 1905, Tilak himself admitted that the growth of modern industries would alone solve the problem. Thus, the greatest prophet of orthodox nationalism was forced to pay homage to that force against whose social tendencies, as expressed in the earlier Congresses, he revolted, and which would make the cherished ideal of spiritual civilization an impossibility.

The theory of "integral nationalism" formulated by Tilak was subsequently accorded a philosophico-spiritual sublimity by Pal and Ghosh; but it had to cut loose from its rigid orthodox moorings, which invoked only the forces of reaction of an apparently violent nature, but of little durable strength. The surrender of its intrinsic principles in favour of more revolutionary social forces, signified the inherent impotency of the reactionary tendencies that ran through its ideological structure. It revealed the impossibility of building the future after the image of the past, however admirable, however ideal the latter might be. It gave an ominous warning that it was the sordid material interest of the bourgeoisie, a comparatively small class of the society, and not the 'spiritual uplift' of the people, that was the motive force

behind the movement for national independence. The 'integral nationalism' of the Extremist Party became a political force when it entered the struggle for material benefit, and that too of a small class of exploiters. Although its abstract philosophical ideology still remained couched in modernized orthodoxy with a tint of mysticism, the cardinal points in its political programme dealt with things temporal. It could hardly be distinguished from modern nationalism, in that it also advocated the development of a new economic basis of society, which the growth of capitalist industrial production would inevitably entail.

The rise of the bourgeoisie and the dissipation of the old social order, were factors indispensable for the success of Indian nationalism. Everything should be sacrificed on the altar of the coming national deity, the bourgeoisie. This was to take place, in spite of all the talk about the spirituality of Indian nationhood. Besides the struggle with the foreign enemy, there was another struggle of greater significance inside the national movement. This was a social strife, a struggle between the old and the new, between the forces of reaction and those of progress. As was ordained by the imperious verdict of history, the latter proved triumphant. The nationalism of lower middle-class, whose economic condition must make it more revolutionary than the rich liberal intellectuals, went on gradually extricating itself from the quagmire of orthodoxy. In the field of pragmatic politics, it took the lead from the progressive elders; and soon went ahead of them. It could do so, not on account of its orthodox and spiritual philosophy, but in spite of it, because the latter failed to prevent the material laws from asserting themselves. The lower middle-class was economically bankrupt; there was no hope for it but in a radical change of the existing order of society. The rich intellectuals and the propertied bourgeoisie could not help being cautious, despite their social progressiveness, since they needed the protection of an established government. But the proletarianized lower middle-class, which

was the social origin of 'integral nationalism' had nothing to stake, and therefore could afford to be more reckless and more extreme in its political views.

In 1907 the programme of the Extremist Party, as formulated by Bepin Chandra Pal, stood as follows:

1. Promotion of education as widely as possible.
2. Raising of national volunteers.
3. Development of national industries.
4. Establishment of a political organization with the object of assuming the functions of national government when the time came.

With this programme, conspicuous by the absence of its original orthodoxy of creed as formulated by Tilak, "integral nationalism" dominated the Congress of 1906 which declared Swaraj to be its political ideal. Defence of Dharma (religion) and the Cow (held sacred by the Hindus) were replaced by Swadeshi (encouragement of home industries) and boycott. Thus it was proved that orthodoxy was not the weapon with which such a mighty modern enemy as British Imperialism could be fought. A hundred and fifty years of determined, systematic suppression could not kill the germs which were to develop into modern bourgeoisie, which eventually was to be born in the course of evolution. In order to fall in with the scheme of this process of social evolution, orthodox nationalism had to bow down before imperious material laws, in spite of its ideal of spirituality. It could not have become a factor in the modern political movement had it persisted in clinging to its original practice.

The boycott, however, failed to achieve any serious result. Swadeshi propaganda found the common people rather lukewarm. Economic fallacies involved in these steps were responsible for the failure. Nevertheless, machine industries owned by native capital received a considerable impetus, and the political leaders learned a lesson. They discovered that the popular support behind the Congress was not strong enough to warrant an uncompromising struggle with the government. The latter, on its part met the liberal bourgeoisie

half-way with petty concessions, and came down upon Extremists with the heavy hand of repression. Lord Morley's policy of rallying the Moderates' was a recognition of the dynamic forces of revolution contained in the progressive element of Indian society. The object, however, was not to give full sanction to the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, but rather to deceive it by worthless administrative reform. The 'Moderates accepted the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, not as valuable concessions in themselves, but as the beginning of a new era.

The following years saw a steady growth of native industrialism, in spite of the fact that the government still persisted in its policy of obstruction. But the economic basis of imperialism itself had changed. Capital was being exported to the colonies, in an ever-increasing amount. The industrialization of India had begun, and the native bourgeoisie could no longer be excluded altogether.

The questionable success of aggressive tactics once more convinced the Moderates of the prudence of evolutionary methods. They looked dubiously upon the sentimental enthusiasm stirred up by the orthodox nationalists, whose reactionary social tendencies appealed to the people, kept in ignorance by the carefully manipulated policy of the British government. But the forces of reaction also had lost their potentiality, in consequence of the loss of an economic basis. They were largely maintained by the artificial stimulation given by the British government. Therefore, the faint popular response to orthodox nationalism was merely sentimental and temporary. If the masses of the people remained apathetic to the national movement sanctified with religion, it was not the foreign rule that was to be blamed for it. The popular apathy was the result of the social institutions and religious teachings of the past. In order to be successful, modern nationalism, instead of ~~like~~ those institutions and teachings making for the ~~apathy~~, should base itself upon the forces and tendency to disrupt and dissipate ~~them~~, and that

promise to infuse new vigour in the social organism as a result of new property relation.

The attempt of the Moderates to rescue the Congress from what they considered the reckless tactics of the Extremists, resulted in the split of 1907. The following years saw the Moderates in the background, leaving the political arena not so much to the Extremists as to the extra-Congress revolutionary organizations, which dominated the situation less by political agitation than by terrorist activities. Persecution of its principal leaders including Tilak, who was sentenced to six years hard labour in 1908, broke down the Extremist Party. A year and a half in jail (1908-09) brought the philosopher and ascetic in Aurobindo Ghosh into predominance, and he practically retired from politics. Pal appeared to be bewildered by the extremely contradictory tendencies of his own ideas. Bourgeois radicalism coupled with religious reformism rendered his political vision rather foggy. He migrated to London (1908) to propagandize the British democracy, thus undertaking an act for which he and his party fellows had heaped insults on the Moderates. The astounding change in his political convictions became evident when on leaving London in 1912 he declared:

"Should Providence offer me choice of absolute independence for India with one hand, and the alternative of self-government within the Empire with the other, I would unhesitatingly accept the latter."

*This statement betrayed the modification, if not abandonment, of his former theory of "aggressive nationalism" which would not permit any foreign element to enter into the making of the Indian nation. It was admitted that the spiritual civilization of India would not satisfy the needs of a modern nation, and that the benefits of the 'soulless' Western civilization were necessary. Progressive liberalism was getting the upper hand of the religious mysticism in Pal's nationalistic philosophy. Revolutionary tendencies overwhelmed the forces of reaction focussed through him. His pathetic desire for the imperial connection, in*

itself, was but a sign of subjective weakness; but this desire originated in a hidden mistrust of all those ideals cherished by orthodox nationalism.

The practical extermination of the Extremist Party did not stamp out orthodox nationalism, which found a stronghold in the secret revolutionary societies, whose programme was the overthrow of British domination by means of terrorist campaigns, to culminate in an uprising at a suitable opportunity. The members of these secret organizations, which outlived years of severest persecution by the government, were more romantic ascetics of justice character than revolutionaries with a political vision. Through them were expressed the forces of reaction and revolution. They were the product of a society in a great crisis, which was marked by a fanatic resistance of the old to the inevitable appearance of the new. Both these conflicting forces with their origin in the material background of social disintegration on the one hand and readjustment on the other, acted and reacted on the psychology of these young men organized in secret revolutionary societies, and produced in them political nihilism, social confusion and mystic religious orthodoxy. To them national independence meant spiritual imperialism. Clarification of the political tendencies of these fanatical ascetics could not take place until the class cleavage in the society became more glaring and more cruel. And since class cleavage was to follow the development of the bourgeoisie, the field of activity of these ardent revolutionaries remained confined to futile conspiracies, until the society underwent the necessary transformation. In every respect proletarianized by the capitalist society, these lower middle-class intellectuals were objectively social anarchists. National pre-occupations clouded their vision of social antagonism, and made them fall temporary and unconscious victims of the forces of reaction. Their natural tendencies towards religious socialism were taken by storm by the romantic ideal of a great spiritual mission awaiting the Indian nation.



The years preceeding the great world war saw the recuperation of the bourgeois political tendencies in the revived Congress, which had played a rather insignificant role in the years following the disaster of 1907. In 1910 the Congress was recognized by the right-wing moderates. An English liberal, Sir William Wedderburn, was called to preside, as if to vivify the thanks for the Morley-Minto Reforms. Then followed a period of calm, to be disturbed by a violent storm in the first years of the war, when the secret revolutionary societies made a determined, but abortive attempt at a national uprising. Subsequently, the Congress became the fighting political apparatus of the bourgeoisie united upon a common platform, until the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 brought a split. But the most outstanding feature of this period was the appearance of a new factor on the political field. This was the working-class.

### 8. Present Situation : Review and Perspective

Strong Cross-Currents have always been the feature of the political movement of modern India. In the last three years, this feature has become more and more remarkable in proportion as the nationalist movement acquired strength and assumed dimensions positively alarming to the British authorities. It is since 1918 that the movement for national liberation began to spread beyond the narrow circle of the middle-class and affect the masses of the people. The growing disaffection of the people at large has added potentiality to the nationalist movement. But the very awakening of the masses, which has enabled the political movement of the bourgeoisie to outgrow the stage of agitation and propaganda and enter into an active fight, has at the same time brought into evidence another cross-current which threatens to turn the tide in the near future. It marks the initiation of a triangular fight, in which class antagonism and the national struggle as will be intensified side by side. The development of the bourgeoisie stiffens the national struggle as well as intensifies the class-cleavage by creating a proletarian class.

This process of class-readjustment has been going on in India within the last few years and the political movement must be affected by it.

Indian nationalism, whether of the progressive character of evolutionary tactics as advocated by the Moderates now in league with the Imperialist Government, or based on the integralist theory of the Extremists, orthodox in social tendencies, is fundamentally a bourgeois movement. Excepting the religious orthodox—whose violent outbursts not so much against the British Government as against the 'Western Civilization' it stands for, do not make them any less the exponents of the forces of reaction—all shades of opinion in the national movement tend consciously or unconsciously, to the enhancement of the material interests of the intellectual and propertied middle-class. Even the reactionary nationalism of the orthodox religionists, in its purely political activities, finds itself obliged to back the bourgeoisie. This was proved when the greatest stalwart of religious nationalism, Tilak, formulated the theory of attaining Swaraj by fostering the growth of indigenous industries. At the present moment, Gandhi also tries to save the spiritual civilization of India through the aggrandizement of the merchants and manufacturers.

The representative institutions demanded by the evolutionary Moderates, when fully inaugurated, will open the gates of the paradise lost more than a hundred and fifty years ago, to the intellectual and capitalist bourgeoisie. Free access to the higher administrative posts will be allowed to the former, while fiscal autonomy will mean the protection of Indian industries by means of tariff barriers against all foreign competitors, including England herself. Only in that case, boycott of foreign goods, considered by the Extremists to be a powerful weapon in the political struggle, can be used with effect. The following extract from the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Calcutta Congress (1890), contains the fundamental doctrines and object of bourgeois liberal nationalism.

"It is perfectly correct that the ignorant classes whom we seek to represent are still unable to take an active interest in the many social and administrative problems which are now engaging the attention of the educated class; but history teaches us that in all the countries and in all ages, it is the thinking who lead the unthinking, and we are bound to think for ourselves and for those who are still too ignorant to exercise that important function."

Himself a rich lawyer, as well as belonging to the landed aristocracy, the speaker of these words voiced what his class, still in a backward stage of development, understood by a national government based on principles of popular representation. It is the rule of the national bourgeoisie which the Congress sought for; the Moderates as well as the Extremists, the progressive liberals as well as the orthodox religionists, all agree on this political conviction in their nationalism.

The Extremists, who have always based their nationalism on the superiority of India's spiritual civilization, in the field of pure politics prove themselves equally ardent defenders of the material interests of the national bourgeoisie. On supporting the Resolution of Self-Government in the Lucknow Congress of 1916, Tilak, the great advocate of the 'common people' said: "I would not care if they (rights of self-government) are granted to the lower and lowest classes of the Hindu population, provided that the British Government considers them more fit than the educated classes of India for exercising those rights." These words contain a challenge to the possible thought that the lower classes are and can be better fitted than the educated classes to exercise the rights and privileges accruing from political autonomy. In answer to a question put to him "Whether the Indian masses would be any less exploited by the native bourgeoisie wielding political state power", Lajpat Rai once told that he would prefer to be kicked by his brother than by a foreigner. And above all, the programme of fostering native industries betrays the bourgeois character even of the orthodox nationalism of the Extremists.

The movement for national liberation is a struggle of the native middle-class against the economic and political monopoly of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But the former cannot succeed in the struggle, nor even threaten its opponent to make substantial concessions, without the support of the masses of the people. Because the Indian middle-class is still weak numerically, economically, and socially, hence the necessity of the nationalism in the name of which the people can be led to fight; the victory gained in this fight, however, will not change very much the condition of those whose blood it will cost. The constitutional democratic theories of the Moderates are beyond the comprehension of the common people, and therefore cannot be the motive force of Indian nationalism. Their economic programme, which professes to foster modern industries with native capital by every means, is bound, nevertheless, to revolutionize the position of the toiling masses, and will eventually bring them within the reach of political agitation. But the development of a native capitalist class will, at the same time, inevitably intensify the class-antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the working-masses. When the latter will begin the struggle earnestly, it is expected to be more of a social nature than a political movement for national liberation. Since 1918, the Indian movement has entered this stage. It may still have the appearance of a national struggle involving masses of the population, but fundamentally it is a social strife, the revolt of the exploited against the exploiting class, irrespective of nationality.

The Extremists, now called the Non-cooperators, have had better success than the Moderates in drawing the masses under the influence of nationalism. But a closer study shows that it is not the demagogic methods nor the religious character attached to the nationalist campaign to which this apparent success is to be attributed. There are deeper economic reasons behind it. It is not by a better understanding of the social problem that the Extremists have succeeded

where the Moderates failed. In fact, the reactionary tendency of orthodox extremism makes it blind to these social problems on whose radical solution depends the success of the Indian movement. The discontent and growing unrest among the masses, brought about by economic exploitation intensified during the war, was seized by the Congress under the leadership of the Extremists, and turned into a popular demonstration demanding national liberation. But in spite of their religious idiosyncrasies and orthodox inclinations, the social affiliation of the Extremists is identical with that of the Moderates. In the spontaneous mass-upheavals, they discovered the force which could be utilized for the triumph of the native bourgeoisie. But they could not develop the potentiality of the mass movement by leading it in accordance with its economic urges and social tendencies. Their tactics were to strengthen the nationalist movement by the questionable method of exploiting the ignorance of the masses. And the best way of exploiting the ignorance of the masses was to make a religion of nationalism. These tactics led to the appearance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the political horizon, and the temporary eclipse of all other politico-social tendencies in the shade of Gandhism, which has reached a crisis after having swept the country for two years.

In Gandhism culminates all the social tendencies that have always differentiated the two principles of Indian nationalism. In fact, Gandhism is the acutest and most desperate manifestation of the forces of reaction, trying to hold their own against the objectively revolutionary tendencies contained in the liberal bourgeois nationalism. The impending wane of Gandhism signifies the collapse of the reactionary forces and their total elimination from the political movement.

Ever since its inception, the political movement of modern India has contained two tendencies of diverse character. Progressive politically and revolutionary in social questions, the one has always been evolutionary and compromising in

tactics. In spite of its apparently intransigent attitude towards the foreign domination, the other is reactionary socially. Notwithstanding its subjectively reformistic character, the first is and has always been objectively revolutionary because its social basis is the bourgeoisie, and it is conscious of the fact. But this tendency has failed and will always fail to play any outwardly revolutionary role because the conditions for a purely bourgeois revolution do not exist in India. The Indian national movement is not a struggle of the commercial and industrial middle-class against decrepit feudalism. The Indian bourgeoisie is not engaged in a class-struggle. *The basis of the national movement is the rivalry of a weak and suppressed bourgeoisie against its immensely stronger imperialist prototype* controlling the state power. To its great misfortune, the Indian middle-class was long ago deprived of its historic role of freeing the productive classes from the fetters of feudal bondage. The present fight of the Indian bourgeoisie cannot be, therefore, unrelenting. Its growth and prosperity are not necessarily conditional upon the total destruction of its present enemy. Owing to this relative weakness of its social foundation, nationalism of the progressive tendency headed by the class conscious bourgeoisie, is bound to be compromising. It is inherently more inimical to the possible revival of social and political reaction than to the British rule which, in spite of itself, promises protection to the advent of capitalist civilization in India. A mass revolt temporarily swayed by the influence of orthodox nationalism, or actuated by the vigorous spirit of class-struggle, will be looked upon with equal apprehension by the progressive national democrats, conscious of their economic interests and social affiliation. Because, if the first is the case, it will signify a social and political reaction seriously detrimental to the still weak progressive movement, whereas a revolt of the working-class is always very disquieting to the bourgeoisie. Both eventualities are more menacing to the interests of the liberal bourgeoisie than the British government. Therefore, the constitutional democrats, in spite of their revolutionary significance as an objective force, are

not only not in a position to stir up and head a mass movement, but are very likely to be driven to the protecting arms of their imperialist peer in the event of such a movement, which is mortally menacing to the bourgeois institutions, so precious, so profitable, so congenial to the peaceful development of the middle-class.

Orthodox nationalism, on the other hand, is closer to the understanding of the people, and for this reason succeeds in provoking enthusiasm from time to time. But the reactionary tendencies inherent in it preclude the possibility of its ever becoming a dynamic revolutionary force, which alone is able to shake the foundation of foreign rule and start the people on the road to further progress. The backwardness of the people makes them respond more to religious nationalism than to constitutional democracy. The inevitable incapacity of the progressive bourgeoisie to assume the leadership of the national movement on a mass basis, left the ground at the command of orthodox nationalism which sought to incite the people against the foreign domination in the name of religion and culture. But they also failed, because the masses remained equally passive to the national movement based upon religion. At last the stings of economic exploitation exhausted their patience and religious calm, which owed their baneful origin and durability, to the very spiritual national culture they are called upon to defend. It was the narcotic effect of the much-vaunted 'spiritual civilization' which kept the Indian masses apathetic to any movement for material progress. They have been taught to sacrifice the hallucinations of the phenomenal world in expectation of a blissful existence hereafter. The present awakening is a reaction against the age-long resignation, created by religious teachings and the tenets of spiritual culture. Therefore it cannot be used for a national movement tending towards the revival of the spiritual civilization of India. Here lies the contradiction in the orthodox nationalism as expressed of late in the cult of Gandhism. It endeavours to utilize the mass energy for the perpetuation or revival of that heritage of national culture which has been made

untenable by the awakening of this energy. The orthodox Extremists in control of the Congress, freed from all Moderate influence, assumed the leadership of a popular mass movement, national in appearance which contains, nevertheless, a challenge to all the fundamental doctrines of orthodox nationalism. Therefore, the intention of the present Congress, which has acquired the status of a political party, to unite the people of all classes in a struggle for national liberation to be carried on under the banner of Gandhism, is bound to be defeated. The signs of the impending defeat are already perceptible.

Gandhism will fall victim to its own contradictions. By Gandhism is meant the school of nationalism which has been reigning supreme in the Indian movement during the last three years. It can be put in another way: The Indian national movement, actuated by the spirit of Gandhism, cannot succeed because in that case it would defeat its own end. In spite of the pious desire of its leaders, post-British India cannot and will not become pre-British India. The Indian people will not be able to overthrow foreign domination until and unless all that is cherished by orthodox nationalists have become things of the past, of venerable memory. Sanctimonious antagonism to the 'satanic Western civilization', a tendency which in spite of its pathetic impotency, smacks of reaction, cannot be the life of a movement whose success will be marked by the crowning of the native bourgeoisie, who will prove to be as disruptive as the British ruler in so far as the social and religious ideals of orthodox nationalism are concerned. The victory of Indian nationalism will be the victory of the progressive middle-class, which may build a monument to the memory of the Mahatma for the valuable services he rendered them involuntarily, but which will never share his pious indignation against Western civilization, which is after all only a certain stage of social development through which every human community has to pass. This victory will be won, not through 'suffering and soul-force', but with blood and tears and will be maintained by blood and iron. But it must come. The introduction of "Western civilization" so heartily hated



by Gandhi is the reward of the fierce fight for national independence to which he seeks to lead the people. He is working for something which is mortally antagonistic to the reactionary forces operating through him, and whose standard bearer he unconsciously is.

Before proceeding to review the happenings in the Indian movement since the beginning of the world war from the point of view stated above, it will be worth while to analyse Gandhism, because in it is ample expression of all the ebbing vitality contained in orthodox nationalism. The imminent collapse of Gandhism will close a romantic and exciting chapter of the Indian national movement. It will demonstrate that a socially revolutionary movement cannot be influenced by reactionary forces. It will disclose the incompatibility between the national struggle having for its object the aggrandizement of the bourgeoisie and the revolt of the working masses against class exploitation—a revolt which nevertheless has contributed strength to the Congress in the last years of its activities.

Although somewhat unique in its idiosyncracies and fanaticism, the Gandhi cult is not an innovation. Divested of the rebellious spirit and the shrewd politician in him, Tilak would resemble Gandhi in so far as religious beliefs and spiritual prejudices are concerned. But for his versatility in modern thought and characteristic looseness of conviction, Bipin Chandra Pal would perchance join the Mahatma in the passionate denunciation of everything that adds to the material comfort of man. Had he been more of a monomaniac than a profound thinker with metaphysical preoccupations, Aurobindo Ghosh would subscribe to Gandhi's philosophy, which pretends to command a rushing tide. "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther". In the contemporary epoch outside India, Tolstoy has been the apostle of what Gandhi professes. In fact the latter is an avowed disciple of the former. Gandhism is nothing but petty-bourgeois humanitarianism hopelessly bewildered in the clashes of the staggering forces of human progress. The crocodile tears of this humanitarianism are shed ostensibly for the undeniable sufferings of the majority

in capitalist society, but they are really caused by grief over the end of the old order, already destroyed or about to be so. It pines for that ancient golden age when the majority were kept in blissful ignorance in order that a few could roll in idle luxury, undisturbed by the revolt of the discontented; the spiritual culture of which was based on the barbarism of the people at large; the simplicity of which was the sign of its backwardness. This longing glance backward is due, in some cases, to the consummate intrigues of the forces of reaction, and in others, to involuntary subordination to the influence of the same agency. Its tendency towards a sort of religious or utopian socialism proves that Gandhism, as well as its source Tolstoyism, belongs to the latter category. Or in other words, the services rendered by it to reaction are involuntary.

It was in 1908 while still in South Africa that Gandhi formulated his philosophy of 'Non-resistance' and 'Soulforce' in a small book called *Indian Home Rule*. It appears that since then he had not learnt anything nor had he forgotten anything till January 1921, when in the preface to the third edition of his book he confessed :

"It (the book) teaches the gospel of love in the place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul-force against brute force. I withdrew (in this edition) nothing..... But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the Swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it....I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization....It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for."

These passages make one suspect a wavering in the belief of the author. But the preceding as well as following para-

graphs obviate such possible suspicions. Before declaring that the ideals of his philosophy are practically untenable in these days, Gandhi fortifies himself by the following confession of faith : "My conviction is deeper today than ever. I feel that if India would discard modern civilization, she can only gain by doing so." And he reassures himself by declaring : "If India adopted the doctrine of love as an active part of her religion and introduced it in her politics, Swaraj would descend upon India from heaven." Gandhi's quarrel is not with the British government, but with 'Western civilization' which is satanic according to his estimation. An Indian government, which would stand for bringing or fostering the same civilization, would be no more acceptable to him. Is there anything more incongruous than this—that a man with such a philosophy should be at the head of a movement which strives for the establishment of a capitalist society? And is there any doubt whatsoever that Gandhism must discredit itself before long if the movement for national liberation is to go ahead?

Gandhi's criticism of modern civilization, that is, capitalist society, is correct. But the remedy he prescribes is not only wrong but impossible. One need not be a sentimental humanitarian, nor a religious fanatic in order to denounce the present order of society in the countries where capitalism rules. But the knowledge of material and social sciences makes one see through the Christian piety of Gandhism, not only Indian, but international (there are Gandhis in every country) and discover the sinister forces of reaction busy in its depths. Its true social character no longer remains unknown on finding such tenets in its philosophy :

"The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always

remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures.''

This sanctimonious philosophy of poverty is not unfamiliar. It has been preached by many prophets who have not only been proved false by history, but the questionableness of their humanitarianism has also been revealed. Such philosophy serves but one object—to guarantee the safety of the vested interests, whose character may differ in different epochs but which essentially is always the same, being based on the right of exploitation of man by man.

Capitalist civilization is rotten; but it cannot be avoided. Neither is it permanent. It must pass away in due course of evolution, giving place to a higher order of society, as the ones preceding it were replaced by it. But it will not collapse because sentimental humanitarians find it full of cruelty and injustice. It will break down under the pressure of its own contradictions. Whether we want it or not, it must be lived through somehow. It must be lived through in order that the fetters of moral and material ignorance that kept the human race bound hitherto can be broken, and mankind in all countries may have the facilities to strive for a higher stage of civilization. National freedom will not enable the people of India to go back, but to surge ahead.

In itself capitalist society has many defects; but it is undoubtedly an improvement on the patriarchal or feudal civilization for which Gandhi and his kind pine. Indian society is inevitably heading toward capitalist civilization, in spite of the premonitions of Gandhi, among many other prophets of similar creed. The desire to see it hark back is as futile as to expect a river to rush back to its source. Caught in the morass of such hopeless contradictions, Gandhism cannot supply the ideology of Indian nationalism. The revolutionary character of the latter is contrary to it. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Gandhism, better said, the personality of Gandhi, exercised a considerable influence on the Indian movement in the last three years. Or in other words, just about the time that the National Congress was finding

the first response among the ranks of the working masses, it came under the domination of a spirit which is essentially reactionary and non-revolutionary in a very frank way. How did it happen? How could a revolutionary movement accept a leadership with antagonistic tendencies? This question leads us to a review of the movement.

The attempts made by the secret revolutionary societies to organize an armed uprising in the first year of the world war were easily thwarted. These organizations could be crushed, or prevented from constituting any serious danger, because they relied more upon conspiracies than upon revolutionary social forces. There was some discontent among the Indian soldiers, which was suffocated if not removed, by severe military measures. The masses of the people remained passive, while the educated lower middle-class gloated over German victories and expected a possible defeat of the British, which prospect was conducive to the success of Indian nationalism. But the political parties, without any remarkable exception, protested loyalty to the British government and offered unconditional assistance in the prosecution of the war. Even Tilak, who had just come out of jail after six years, was not an exception. The Congress, under the leadership of the Moderates representing the rich intellectuals and capitalist class, outdid everybody in these protestations of loyalty. But behind this mask of loyalty was to be noticed either an anxious expectation or a spiteful glee on all faces. A whisper ran through the length and breadth of the country that the British power was crumbling. Even in the far-off villages this whisper raised an echo. There was a period of suspense and tension.

In 1915 the military strength of the British Indian government was depleted to the minimum. All the available troops were sent out, and the new recruits, British as well as native, were qualitatively incapable of resisting a possible national upheaval. If there had been a revolutionary national consciousness in the Indian people anywhere outside the small middle-class, that was the most opportune moment

to strike a blow which would have been mortal in all probability. The loyalty professed so vigorously was false; there was much discontent and disaffection, but it had not yet contaminated the masses. The potentiality of this discontent was reduced to almost nothing when the capitalist class, the backbone of nationalism, unexpectedly found opportunities for industrial development. The monopoly of imperialist capital was made untenable by war conditions, the competition of manufactured goods imported from European countries, including England herself, was removed. Indian industries suddenly entered upon an era of spectacular growth. This economic revolution deprived the political movement of its most powerful social foundation. The intellectual and capitalist middle-class found it profitable to stand by the government. Obstacles to its industrial aspiration removed, the bourgeoisie had no more quarrel with the foreign ruler, at least for the time being. On the contrary, the new era of industrial development needed the protection of an established government. Therefore the loyalty of the bourgeoisie became real, and the leadership of the Congress sank into such sycophancy that to preside over its session of 1915 was selected a man who combined in his person the landed aristocracy, rich liberal professions and officialdom. He was S. P. Sinha later on Sir, then Lord, then His Britannic Majesty's Privy-Councillor etc. on whose head had been showered more blessings of governmental concessions than on any other Indian. He proved himself worthy of the innumerable distinctions received hitherto, and merited more that were to be bestowed subsequently, by uttering in his presidential address such sentiments as the following : "In that critical time it was the duty of India to prove to the great British nation her gratitude for peace and the blessings of civilization secured to her under its aegis for the last hundred and fifty years and more." These words should not be taken as expressing the sentiments of a slavish individual. They were the voice of the class that he represented.

This remarkable abdication of the Congress betrays the innate weakness of the nationalist forces. That element which is the most revolutionary from the objective point of view is liable, nevertheless, to make compromises in every critical moment, by virtue of the fact that its revolutionary energy is not pitted against an enemy which would be unrelentingly hostile to it on the ground of class-struggle. Had the Indian bourgeoisie been fighting against a feudal absolutism, no such compromise would be possible; because the two could never be accommodated as is the case in the relation of the former with capitalist imperialism, which will always readjust its method of exploitation in the way of making concessions to its native partner before risking the eventual conflict. This equivocal position of the socially revolutionary factor in the ranks of the nationalist movement, makes for the possibility of the latter's falling under the orthodox school. The reactionary forces behind orthodox nationalism make them subjectively more hostile to British rule. The antagonism between the reactionary tendencies of orthodox nationalism and the modern civilization which the British domination embodies is much more deep-seated and uncompromising than the rivalry between the Indian and British bourgeoisie.

The interests and aspirations of the economically bankrupt lower middle-class not being identical with those of the rich intellectuals and capitalist bourgeoisie, the arrangements that give temporary satisfaction to the latter do not remove the grievances of the former, thus leaving it in a discontented frame of mind which gets worse. When by virtue of their compromising tactics, the Moderates forfeit the leadership of the movement, the lower middle-class steps in. The latter's economic position makes it more intransigent, more extremist in its political demands. But the petty bourgeois social bearing of the Extremists makes them susceptible to the influence of the forces of reaction masquerading in the garb of such cults as spiritual civilization, humanitarianism and the like. On account of its reactionary tendencies, orthodox nationalism, embraced by the discontented

petty bourgeoisie, is more uncompromising in its fight against foreign rule, which is the personification of a social order mortally inimical to its ideals. But doomed to death by the imperious verdict of history, it cannot infuse any vitality in the national movement in spite of its more revolutionary appearance. Nevertheless, its bitter hostility to modern civilization enables it to be more uncompromising to British rule, and therefore to take up the fight and carry it on further than the point at which the Moderates desert it. This was the social reason which explains how the Indian national movement in its most revolutionary period, could be actuated by such a reactionary philosophy as Gandhism.

The second year of the war found the rich intellectual and bourgeois leaders of the national movement reconciled to the British rule and actively supporting it, at a time when it could possibly have been overthrown or at least substantial concessions wrung from its reluctant hand, by threats of withholding assistance to conduct the war. But such measures were altogether unthinkable for the Moderate Party, whose economic interest would be jeopardized more by the unsettled conditions that were most likely to follow a premature overthrow of the British Government than by its continuation, specially when the latter was forced by unexpected circumstances to modify, if not abandon, its former economic policy. The position of the Moderates at that critical moment was very well formulated in the following words of B. L. Mittra, one of their leaders:

“The Moderates consider co-operation with the English necessary for national development, political, industrial, economic and otherwise. The Extremists would straightaway assume full responsibility of government; the Moderates think that would lead to chaos, and would proceed by stages. It is the difference between cataclysm and evolution. The Extremists’ ideal is destruction of the existing order of things in the hope that something better will take its place, for nothing can be worse than what is, the Moderates’ ideal is for formation of a new order of things on definite progressive lines.”



But the very possibility of economic and industrial development which satisfied temporarily the aspirations of the rich bourgeoisie promised the emergence of another social factor which would be more revolutionary than both the political parties hitherto sharing the leadership of the national movement. The rapid development of large scale machine industries and the emergency extension of the already existing ones, led to the concentration of the masses of working people in cities with utterly insufficient accommodation for the sudden influx of additional inhabitants. The sudden increase in the number of consumers was very readily taken advantage of by the speculating traders. Consequently prices went up so much that they exceeded the limits of the miserable wages in the newly-grown capitalist industries. All the effects of a social readjustment resulting from a sudden industrial revolution were felt. Potential causes of a mass revolt were to be expected from such a situation. Increased export caused an acute scarcity of food grains. The burden of forced contribution to the war loans, so liberally subscribed to by the loyal landed aristocracy, who transferred them immediately on to the shoulders of the poor cultivator, prepared the ground for an agrarian revolt. Then, the petty bourgeoisie and the lower middle-class were still smarting under their unredressed grievances; their hopeless economic condition could not be expected to improve in any way by the prospect of a great industrial development or administrative reforms. The surrender of the progressive Moderates left all these revolutionary forces either partially manifest, or still brewing under the surface, without political leadership. The field was clear for orthodox nationalism. Reaction sought to unite all these unconscious forces of revolution in a movement ostensibly anti-British, but really, and according to the confession of the orthodox leaders, to combat the advent of a new order which was denounced as 'satanic' or 'sordid materialism'. All those revolutionary forces directly or indirectly tended towards the destruction of Imperialism, as the rankest

manifestation of class-domination; reactionary nationalism also desired the overthrow of British rule, but with a different purpose. A common foe made for the alliance of these two most incompatible, may antagonistic tendencies. And the ignorance of the masses, aided by the lack of social or political conviction of the petty bourgeoisie, handed the leadership of the movement over to the orthodox Extremists.

The advent of native orthodoxy in the person of Gandhi was preceded by a reaction voluntarily or involuntarily serving the cause of Imperialism. Annie Besant was its apostle. She was seemingly an avowed spiritualist dreading all contamination of things material, but in reality a masked defender of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie to which she belonged, in spite of her Irish birth. She had always been a champion of the British Empire, which she chose to call the foundation of a real League of Nations. Her ideal of the League of Nations was evidently the incorporation of the whole world in the British Empire. The same instinct which, thirty years ago, had induced the liberal imperialist Hume to promote the idea of founding the National Congress, led Mrs Besant to arise from her theosophical esoterics, in which she had immersed herself ever since she came to India, and pollute her holiness with such sordid materialism as politics. Her instinctive zeal for the welfare (not spiritual) of the imperialist bourgeoisie disquieted her at the sight of the ominous clouds gathering on the political horizon. Long residence in the country and intimate relation with the lower middle-class intellectuals, enabled her to gauge the situation cleverly. She set out with the mission of stemming the rising tide of revolution.

Unnoticed by the bourgeois political parties, a new combination of social forces was in the process of consummation. The imminent spontaneous upheaval of the working masses, both in the cities as well as in the countryside, would open up a new vision to the de-classed young intellectuals dissipating their revolutionary energy in futile conspiracies. The revolt of the oppressed masses and the ruthless manner in

which such a revolt would surely be suppressed by the government with the aid and connivance of the national bourgeoisie, would clarify their social tendencies, thus rescuing them from the vicious circle of orthodox nationalism, and push them forward into the healthy and invigorating atmosphere of an inevitable class struggle against the native as well as the foreign exploiting class. Once launched on such a consciously revolutionary road the Indian national movement would soon acquire real strength. Neither British oppression, nor the compromising tactics of the bourgeoisie, nor the questionable orthodoxy of the reactionary religionists would be able to check or distort the victorious march of such a movement.

This was a gloomy prospect for imperial domination as well as that of which the native bourgeoisie was dreaming in the name of national independence. How could such a fatal eventuality be averted? An outburst of orthodox nationalism tickling the spiritual imperialism of the young revolutionaries, supplemented by a show of extremism in political demands, might be expected to save the situation. Mrs Besant captured the imagination and admiration of the revolutionary-inclined young intellectuals by preaching with her wanted eloquence the familiar gospel of the spiritual superiority of Indian over Western culture, and condemning the British government as the worst manifestation of Western materialism from which, she exclaimed, the innocent children of sacred India must be saved. Thus a wrong channel was opened for the great revolutionary wave that was raising its majestic crest on the offling of the society. Essentially a socio-economic struggle, the impending movement must assume a political manifestation with considerable latitude for nationalist pre-occupations. The astuteness of Mrs Besant caught on to the familiar, but harmless, political slogan of 'Home Rule' which swung the Extremists on her side, because it promised to lead the movement abandoned by the Moderates. In consequence, those who might have sought the destruction of British domination with the aid of revolutionary mass-action committed themselves to the ambiguous programme of self-government

within the British Empire. Mrs. Besant rendered a valuable service to the imperial cause so dear to her, although the bureaucratic government did not seem to appreciate her merits and made a pseudo-martyr of her.

The prospect of a mass upheaval completely drove the progressive bourgeoisie into the protecting arms of its imperialist peer, but inspired the orthodox Extremists, who stepped into the control of the movement. Under their leadership it assumed a politically aggressive character, but its social significance was confused for the time being. Mrs Besant could not prevent the inevitable ; she only prepared the ground for Gandhi, whose advent pushed her into well-merited disgrace. Both preached the doctrine of orthodox nationalism, but the difference lay in the respective object in view. The former desired to save the Indians from modern materialism in order to insure the continuance of British domination, while the latter's hostility to Western civilization was fomented by the apprehension that it would strike at the root of the religious, intellectual and patriarchal vested interests which, in the name of spiritual culture, held the Indian masses in moral as well as material bondage.

In 1916 the National Congress entered upon a new chapter of its history. From that year it ceased to be the loosely organized deliberative body that it had been so far, and assumed the character of a cohesive political party— a fighting organ. The political programme of the Extremists was completely adopted, though the Moderates still participated in the Congress, and one of the most mediocre from their midst was chosen to preside over the session of 1916 held in Lucknow. The embarrassing position of the imperial power, together with the indications of a popular awakening, encouraged the Congress. It decided to demand an adequate price for the support which the Indian bourgeoisie was willing to render the British government. The latter had already shown an inclination to make the concessions by placing with the native factories large orders for war materials, by encouraging war production in industrial plants owned by native capital, and

lastly by appointing a commission to investigate the possibilities of modern industries in India and devise ways and means of fostering them by native capital. Something more significant happened to show that the British government was serious in its new policy of compromise. Just before his extended term of office was over in the middle of 1916, the then viceroy Lord Hardinge was known to be engaged in drafting a scheme of reforms which would cater liberally to the ambitions of the bourgeoisie, as represented by the Moderates. Then, the talk of a radical reconstruction in imperial relations after the war reached the ears of the Indian bourgeoisie. The British Premier's—Lord Asquith's—promise that in consideration of her war services India would be looked at from 'a new angle of vision' was interpreted as the offer of dominion status with a government responsible to the Indian people. All these factors contributed to the crystallization of such a feeling that the Lucknow Congress (1916) swayed clear to the left. It was dominated by the Extremists' outlook in spite of its Moderate president.

It was not only the Congress dominated by the Extremist politicians that reflected the vigour felt by the bourgeoisie. It was manifested in another and quite unexpected way. Before the Congress met, the elected members of the Legislative Council, which owed its existence to the Morley Reforms of 1909, presented a memorandum to the government demanding an immediate readjustment in the state administration. The repeal of the Arms Act and the organization of an Indian volunteer corps were very energetically pressed. The necessity of mending the autocratic character of the British Indian government and of transferring some of its power to the elected representatives of the people was emphatically urged. The memorandum expressed the point of view of that section of the bourgeoisie already in alliance with the government, which raised its voice to say that if the government desired to be assured of its valuable services, it must show an inclination to pay a reasonable price. Still looking up to the British government as an indispensable protection, the bourgeoisie

was encouraged to assume such an aggressive attitude not only through its growing economic importance, but mainly because of the awakening mass-energy, which could be utilized for backing up the demands made. Constitutional agitation was replaced by the haggings of a bargainer. The mass awakening was not yet a conscious movement. But the politically minded middle-class felt the impulse of strength proceeding from the knowledge that the people would follow its lead. The bourgeoisie's claim to national leadership was at last materializing.

What had been formulated as the ultimate goal of the Congress in 1906 was categorically demanded in 1916. In return for the Indian people's support of the war, immediate self-government—Dominion Status—and complete fiscal autonomy were asked for. Both the wings of the Congress, the Moderates as well as the Extremists, subscribed to this demand. It fell to the lot of Surendra nath Banerji, the Moderate veteran and one of the founders of the Congress, to move the resolution on self-government. The president, in course of his speech, formulated the demand as follows:

“India must cease to be a dependency and be raised to the status of a self-governing state, as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities, as an independent unit of the empire”.

He declared that a ‘bloodless revolution’ was already in progress, and a resolution was passed requesting that “the King-Emperor should issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of the British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date”.

Another epoch-making feature of the Lucknow Congress was the unconditional endorsement of its programme and demands by the All-India Muslim League simultaneously in session in the same city. This rapprochement of the two great rivals, if not antagonistic communities, culminated in the so-called Congress-League Scheme formulated and issued as the programme of the Indian National Movement in August 1917. Self-government within the British Empire, with complete fiscal autonomy, was the slogan, and the Congress in which

its sister Muslim organization was incorporated, entered the period of an active political fight.

At this point it is necessary to make a retrospective study in order that the full significance of this rapprochement may be well understood. Except for one or two solitary figures, the founders of the National Congress were all non-Muslims. Orthodox nationalism was based upon aggressive Hinduism. The Extremist party was born and developed as a Hindu party. It was actuated by the Hindu religion; its ideology was derived from Hindu philosophy. The ruling power of the land till but a relatively short time ago, the Muslims, at least the upper class with the blood of the conquering race, did not consider themselves the same as the Hindu population. With their fierce fanaticism, they could not be expected to feel themselves an integral part of the Indian people, welded together by religious consciousness and cultural traditions. Then, on account of a higher grade of social development, the Hindu intellectuals responded more readily to those progressive political and social thoughts which made for the birth of modern nationalism and the eventual foundation of the Congress. When the Western educated Hindu intellectuals began the agitation for representative government, the Muslims would not have anything to do with them. The latter looked upon the former with suspicion. The Hindus were in the majority in the bulk of the population as well as in the intellectual and propertied\* middle-class. A government based upon the principles of national representation threatened to be a Hindu supremacy. Naturally the Muslims were not very enthusiastic over a movement fraught with such possibilities. In fact the landed aristocracy and the comparatively few intellectuals among them were decidedly hostile to such a movement. This attitude of theirs gave the foreign ruler the opportunity of using the large Islamic community as an opposition to the nationalism of the Congress. And the imperialist government did use this weapon very cleverly

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\* According to the census of 1921, there are 70,000,000 Muslims out of a total population of 319,000,000.

and not without effect. But the blame for this lack of unity among the Hindus and Muslims is not to be laid entirely at the doors of the government, whose 'divide and rule' policy could not have succeeded had there not been conflicting interests between the two communities. As soon as both communities came to have identical material interests, their union in a political movement could no longer be prevented by the cleverest artifices of the government, nor by the traditional religious antagonism.

The masses of both the communities were equally indifferent to questions political. They lived for centuries side by side in the same villages, engaged in the same occupation of toiling for the maintenance of an extravagantly luxurious ruling class.

Religious antagonism, which undoubtedly did exist, could not however interfere with the unavoidable phenomenon that the society was divided into two classes, the exploited lower class and the exploiting upper class. People professing antagonistic religions were to be found in the ranks of both classes. For convenience of exploitation, religious antagonism was kept alive among the people by the upper class of both the communities. Fanaticism fed upon ignorance made such strategy possible. But the relation between the rich propertied classes of the two communities could not be harmonious, either under the Mohammedan rule, nor afterwards. It was marked by bitter rivalry. The trading middle-class flourishing in the latter days of the Muslim empire was predominantly Hindu, while the ruling Islamic community remained in the backward social stage of feudalism. The British conquest found the Muslim population generally divided into feudal landlords and peasantry. In accordance with the policy of British imperialism in its earlier days, the feudal rulers as well as the landed aristocracy were crushed politically and militarily to a state of impotency—to be preserved, petted and pampered later on. This being the case, the social basis for a liberal intelligentsia was absent in the Muslim community at the time of the British conquest, and



it was long before such a social factor could come into being during the British period.

When the Hindu liberal intellectuals organised the National Congress, the few modern educated Mohammedans that existed in the country belonged exclusively to the landed aristocracy of feudal descent. By class affiliation, these were not prone to progressive ideas, either political or social. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, an aristocratic intellectual, did the pioneer work in starting in 1880 the Aligarh College, with the intention of bringing modern education within the reach of Muslim youths without tampering with the religious prejudices and susceptibilities of his reactionary community. Unlike the Hindu middle-class, the Muslims were still in a stage of social development which was not conducive to the introduction of secular education. The separation of education from religion was looked upon with great apprehension and was universally opposed. Despite his progressive tendencies, Syed Ahmed Khan had to bow down before the forces of reaction still rampant in the Muslim community and compromise on an adjustment of modern secular education with theological teaching in the Aligarh College. He sought to get as many young men as possible educated in modern ways compatible with the tenets of Islam, which, reflecting the tendencies of his community, he held to be indispensable for and more conducive to the welfare of Muslim society than Western civilization. Nevertheless, he looked upon British rule as a providential contact—and implicit loyalty to it was the theme of all his educational and public activities. Under his zealous patronage, Aligarh came to be the Eton of Muslim India. The intellectual centre of the rich aristocracy, its concession to modern education amply counter-balanced by a good dose of theological training, Aligarh naturally failed to produce youthful elements holding social and political ideas similar to the Hindu intellectuals who conceived of a political nationalism as expressed in the organization of the National Congress. While the earlier generation of the Hindu modern intelligentsia became 'denationalized', or in other words, were capable of imbibing fully

progressive social and political thoughts, the products of Aligarh were staunch Muslims above all, and implicit in their loyalty to the British government. This loyalty, however, did not speak for any special characteristic of the Muslim community. It was a natural and inevitable outcome of the social position the Muslims occupied in those days. Besides it was provoked by instinctive rivalry and suspicion against a movement whose success, even partial, would mean a Hindu supremacy in Indian politics. And in those days, to the Muslim upper class of feudal origin, Hindu domination was by no means a better prospect than British rule, which was always willing to show them favouritism. The absence of a class-cohesion was responsible for the political divergence between the Hindus and Muslims. Those of the former, who inaugurated the agitation for representative government and social reforms, were intellectual bourgeoisie, whereas the Aligarh alumni, on whom were showered the good graces of the British government, belonged to the landed aristocracy with social and political tendencies predominantly feudal. Elements so diverse socially could not unite in a national movement. The foreign ruler was not slow in finding this social divergence and communal rivalry, and made full use of them.

The Muslim intellectuals remained loyal to British rule because feudal class affiliation rendered them unresponsive to the progressive political thoughts embraced and propagated by their Hindu contemporaries. Theirs was not loyalty to British rule as such, but loyalty to a particular social order they were zealous to preserve. If they were hostile to the Congress, it was not for its alleged 'seditious' character, but because it represented a tendency inimical to the social, political and religious institutions and traditions cherished as ideal by them. Their support and sympathy for British rule were not purchased, as is generally believed, by petty favouritism, but originated in the belief that British rule would provide a protection for the social order and religious institutions they desired to preserve, and which, they apprehended, would be endangered if the Hindu liberals were to

be given their way. This apprehension was corroborated by the growth of orthodox nationalism, which was bigotedly Hindu in character and therefore could not be expected to be looked upon with equanimity by the Muslim. It was not governmental favouritism, but class affiliation that first kept the Muslim intellectuals away from the Congress, and subsequently arrayed against it the forces of their community. The Muslims could not take part in the national movement until there should arise in their midst a modern bourgeoisie divorced from all feudal connection, whose economic vision would not be limited to land-owning, but extended to commercial and industrial horizons.

Till the earlier years of the twentieth century, politically the Muslim intellectuals were less concerned with Indian affairs than with Pan-Islamism, which embodied the dream of a federation of the Muslim states; a sort a romantic imperialism sanctified by religious authority. In this politico-religious movement, no force making for the growth of nationalism among the Indian Muslims was to be found. In fact, it was an impediment to the development of national consciousness. The Muslim intellectuals of modern India awoke, not to nationalism, but to the dream of an extra-national existence whose realization, however, had been made impossible by various other factors outside India and beyond their control and comprehension. When the politically independent or semi-independent Muslim states like Persia and Turkey felt the call of nationalism as expressed in the revolutions of 1907 and 1908, the impracticability and illusiveness of Pan Islamism became apparent. The religious solidarity of the Muslim world also proved to be little more than a pleasant myth, due to the silence and passivity with which the declaration of Jihad by the Khalifa during the Tripolitan and Balkan Wars was received by the faithful. On the other hand, the attitude of England during the Balkan war led the Indian Muslims to suspect the sincerity of the British patronage they had hitherto believed in.

This double disillusionment made the Muslim intellectuals of India turn towards home politics. They could no longer remain satisfied with the fond dream of Pan-Islamism, which failed to stand the test of experiment in a political as well as a religious sense ; nor could they any longer entrust the interests of their community entirely to the questionable patronage of the British. Pan-Islamism had been smiled upon by the British government so long as it remained a fashionable cult, harmless politically. It was a diversion for the young intellectuals who otherwise might run into mischief, in imitation of their Hindu contemporaries. But in the years following the Turkish revolution, under the spiritual leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress (Young Turk Party), Pan-Islamism took on the character of incipient imperialism. Therefore the condescending smile with which the British Indian government had regarded the Pan-Islamism of Sultan Abdul Hamid turned into a frown when it was converted into the Pan-Turanism of the Young Turks. The spread of Pan-Islamism of the new denomination threatened to be an anti-British movement, and could not be tolerated among the Indian Muslims. This led to a disruption of the relation hitherto subsisting between the Muslim middle-class of India and the British government. But mere anti-British sentiment could not make the Muslims consider themselves as part of the Indian nation, predominated by Hindu ideology and traditions.

It was a factor of an entirely different nature which contributed to the tendency towards political nationalism in the Muslim community. This was the mercantile and industrial class, which developed quite independent of the religious unity of the Muslim world. Its interest in Pan-Islamism, where it existed, was purely that for a fashionable cult, without any vital attachment. It was the political situation of India and the economic policy of the British government which had a vital bearing upon its own development. The anti-British feelings created by events outside India, and spreading among the new generation of Muslim intellectuals

did not affect the Muslim capitalist class, which looked upon British patronage as a necessary factor for its development. By the time the first years of the twentieth century had come into existence a small number of young intellectuals, the ideological pioneers of the Muslim bourgeoisie, who stood for nationalism in which religious and sectarian disputes should be submerged. But the first political expression of the Muslim community was rather anti-nationalistic than national. It was the organization of the All-India Muslim League, in which took part members of the loyal intellectual landed aristocracy and some of the mercantile and industrial class. In fact, the League was organized under the benign auspices of the British government, which wanted to make of it a Muslim opposition to Hindu nationalism. Under the leadership of the religious aristocrat Aga Khan and the official reactionary Ameer Ali, the League proved to be a willing instrument for the insidious designs of the British government. It emphatically protested 'loyalty' as against the 'seditious' attitude of the Hindu Congress, whose claim to national representation was challenged by the very organization of the League which pretended to voice the sentiment of the sixty-seven million Muslim.

Apart from being a bulwark against Hindu nationalism, the League served another purpose of the imperialist government. It raised an opposition against the spread of Pan-Islamism in India. Already in the latter nineties Syed Ahmed Khan as leader of the liberal Muslims of India, had repudiated the title of the Turkish Sultan to the Khawat. For this act he had on his side the traditional authority of the Muslim emperors of Delhi, who never recognized the Turkish Sultan as their Lord Temporal and Spiritual. The founder and first leader of the League, Aga Khan himself claimed direct descent from the Prophet in his capacity as the spiritual head of the Khoja dissenters.

But the pronounced political significance of the Muslim League, under its founders and old leaders, was the opposition to the National Congress, the realization of whose programme

of representative government would be tantamount to Hindu rule. The League came into existence on the very eve of the Extremist triumph over the Congress. Orthodox nationalism with its pronounced religious ideology could not but arouse apprehension among the Muslims. Therefore the need of British protection was doubly felt by the latter. The Partition of Bengal, while a great butt of attack on the government from the nationalists of all shades of opinion, received the approval of the newly born Muslim League; because one of the objects of the partition was to create a large province with an overwhelming Muslim majority in the population. It was in this new province that the Hindu nationalism of the Extremists was very rampant, and the government did succeed in setting the religious fanaticism of the ignorant Muslim majority against it with disastrous results. The atrocities committed on the Hindu minority by the infuriated Muslim mob egged on by the police, seriously harmed the possibility of a national unity embracing the people at large. In spite of all these lamentable consequences of the Partition, the Muslim League went so far as to warn the government, when it was considering its repeal, not to make hasty concessions, which would make for a Hindu supremacy. It was in deference to the point of view put forth by the League that the Indian Council Act of 1909, which was followed two years later by the repeal of the Partition, was based on the Principle of community representation, thus guaranteeing the Muslim minority a privileged position as a remuneration for its loyalty.

But events outside India weakened the faith of the Muslim intellectuals in the good will of the British government, notwithstanding the loyalism of the League and the reciprocal favouritism of the government. Not a few of the young Muslim intellectuals joined the nationalist movement, and began to participate in the Congress. A middle-class had come into existence in the Muslim community. It grew out of the poorer strata of the landed aristocracy and the commercial community. The modern educated youths of this class were violently anti-British on account of the ripples of

Pan-Turanism reaching India. Therefore they swelled the ranks of the Extremists in spite of their religious diversity. The news of the Turkish revolution stirred up the imagination of these young enthusiasts, who sought connection with the Committee of Union and Progress, whose leaders were hailed as the saviours of the Muslim world. The loyalist policy of the Muslim League was assailed by these young intellectuals who could be called revolutionary, considering their anti-British sentiment. But they were far from nationalism as yet. They were willing to join hands with the Hindu Extremists in order to destroy British Imperialism, not for the national liberation of the Indian people, but because they considered the British to be the mortal enemies of Islam. It was the spirit of Pan-Islamism which had an acute out-burst in consequence of the triumph of the Young Turks, who aspired to launch on an imperialist venture in the name of Islam, with the questionable friendship of the Pan-Germans. This wave of Pan-Turanism in India did not go beyond the walls of the modern Madrassas whose number was very small, but a few members of the thin lower middle-class were also agitated by it. The rich upper class remained unshaken in its loyalty, while the Muslim masses were electrified by it as much as the Hindus were by orthodox nationalism.

Nevertheless, the overthrowing of reactionary loyalists like Aga Khan and Ameer Ali from the leadership of the League brought the political movement of the Muslims closer to the Congress. The new leaders of the League were mostly young middle-class intellectuals, and therefore susceptible to nationalism. Even before capturing the leadership, they had criticized the League's advocacy of community representation as detrimental to national solidarity. The gradual subordination of religious orthodoxy to the political radicalism of the Extremists, on the other hand, removed another cause which might have kept, and to some extent did keep, the Muslim intellectuals away from the Congress. The growth of a capitalist bourgeoisie socially distinguished from the aristocratic scions of the reactionary feudal landlords, made

the conception of nationalism possible among the Indian Muslims. This nationalism was distinct from a politico-religious movement on behalf of an imaginary world federation of Islamic states; it was the nationalism of an integral part of the Indian people. Reactionary Muslim landlords could be the object of governmental favouritism as against progressive Hindu intellectuals; but the interests of Muslim capitalists were as hostile as those of the Hindus to imperialist exploitation. This being the essence of the situation, the years preceding the great World War were marked by a steady closing of the ranks of the bourgeoisie, Hindu as well as Muslim, in the movement of political nationalism. In 1916, it was under the presidency of a rich merchant that the Muslim League made common cause with the Congress, which thus became the political organ of the national bourgeoisie, undivided by religious or sectional interests.

The firm attitude of the Congress, especially the Congress-League Scheme, commanded the attention of the government, which promptly showed indications of introducing such reforms as would placate the native capitalist class, till then the driving force behind the increasing vigour of the Congress. The first practical measure by way of these promised concessions was the increased rate of customs duty imposed on the manufactured cotton imported into India. This touched a vital spot by conceding a partial protection, so persistently sought for to the principal and most prosperous Indian industry. It appeared to have had the desired effect. The Indian bourgeoisie did not hesitate to pay the price demanded for this concession. A War Fund of £100,000,000 to be sent as a gift to England, was readily contributed. This partial protection was hailed by the Indian bourgeoisie as an earnest of further concessions that were to come, as the herald of the radical revision of the entire fiscal relation on the different parts of the Empire after the war, as promised by the government.

The schism between the two wings of the nationalist camp could no longer be averted, when the following declaration



was simultaneously made by Montagu in the House of Commons and by the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, in Simla:

“The policy of the British government henceforth was declared to be not only the ‘increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, but also the greatest development of self-government institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire’”.

This declaration complied with almost all the demands of the Moderates. For all those who happened to be free from distrust of the imperialistic policy, it was indeed a liberal promise. The Moderate Party, that is, the rich intellectuals and big capitalists, hailed this declaration as the advent of a new era. They obviously did not believe that the imperialist government would, without a struggle, concede to India that amount of self-government which would practically make her lost to the empire. But they considered it a mistake to press any further at that point. According to their estimation, enough had been secured, and it was advisable to consolidate the new acquisition and prepare for a further advance in due course of time. Gandhi himself, still out of politics and engaged in humanitarian activities, in the beginning of 1915 defined Swaraj as partnership in the British Empire, and prescribed that the way to the realization of Swaraj was by services rendered for the successful prosecution of the war. At the outbreak of the war he had offered his services in an Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps, like the one he had organized and led to the great appreciation of the high command during the Boer war.

The British government, however, felt that the situation in India was much more serious than in 1908-9, in spite of the apparent loyalty of the bourgeoisie during the war and its grateful acceptance of the new reforms. Potential social factors, which did not exist before, had come into operation, and were beginning to make their influence felt on the nationalist movement. Imperial shrewdness did not fail to foresee that the wave of popular revolt following the

cataclysm of the World War could not leave India entirely unaffected. A mass upheaval would add dynamic strength to the nationalist movement. Therefore it was found necessary to convince a powerful social class that it had a stake in the existing government. The Moderates could not be rallied by the government with so little as was found sufficient by the liberal Morley in 1909. The rich bourgeoisie must be made to understand that their further development would no longer be obstructed by the British, in order that, for the continued maintenance of law and order as against the threatening popular disturbances, their unconditional support could be counted upon. With a safe road to progressive development open before it, the rich bourgeoisie would certainly throw its weight against a movement mainly destructive in character. The instinct to preserve vested interests, economic as well as political, would make the rich liberal and propertied bourgeoisie together with the landed aristocracy, opposed to all popular upheavals, threatening the subversion of the established order in favour of something uncertain, which could be either too reactionary or too radical. Neither eventuality was welcome.

These considerations determined the policy of the British government in the latter part of the war and also in the *post bellum* years. The declaration made by the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy in August, 1917 contained the following statement : "That substantial steps should be taken in this direction (of introducing self-governing institutions) as soon as possible, and that it is of highest importance that there should be free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and India." The latter purpose took Montagu to India towards the end of the year. But dominated by the political extremism of the orthodox nationalists, the Congress in December 1917, reaffirmed the resolutions of the previous year and declared that nothing less than Home Rule would be acceptable. Here triumphed the spirit of Mrs Besant who presided over the Congress of 1917. By introducing the slogan of Home Rule

she saved India for the Empire ; left alone, the Extremists, who controlled the Congress completely, might have repudiated the imperial connection, because the awakening mass energy had fired their imagination. The reactionary nationalism preached by Mrs Besant and subsequently taken up by Gandhi, was not compatible with that form of political state which would be the corollary to Home Rule. But Mrs Besant's reactionary designs concerned the political and not social aspect of the India movement. The reactionary tendencies contained in the orthodox nationalism of the followers of Tilak and the Gandhiites are social ; therefore they would not brook any compromise with a political institution which would render them untenable. They would demand complete separation from the British Empire with the desire to save India from the unholy contamination of the sordid materialism of Western civilization, if they dared.

The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme forced a clear split in the ranks of the nationalists. The majority of the Moderates, though not fully satisfied by the reforms promised, accepted them as a big step forward, while the Extremists declared them to be utterly inadequate and rejected them summarily. The Moderates read a promising future in such passages in the Report on which the suggested reforms were based : "We must remember too that the educated Indian has come to the front by hard work ; he has seized the education which we offered him because he first saw its advantages ; and it is he who has advocated and worked for political progress. All this stands to his credit. For thirty years he has developed in his Congress, and latterly in the Muslim League, free popular convocations which expressed his ideals. We owe him sympathy because he has conceived and pursued the idea of managing his own affairs, an aim which no Englishman can fail to respect." These patronizing words tickled the vanity of the rich intellectuals, to whom they meant a recognition of their own importance by the British government. They also concluded from these phrases that their political point of view had been accepted by the government ; the logical

consequence of which acceptance was a matter of elation to them. They looked forward to the advancement of the interest of their class under the protection and sanction of the British government.

The bourgeoisie was further reassured of the prospect of its aggrandizement by the following Statement contained in the Report : "We cannot stay their (of the intelligentsia) progress entirely until education has been extended to the masses ... We have not succeeded in making education practical. It is only now, when the war has revealed the importance of industry, that we have deliberately set about encouraging Indians to undertake the creation of wealth by industrial enterprise, and thereby have offered the educated classes any tangible inducement to overcome their traditional inclination to look down upon practical forms of energy." The aspirations of the capitalists and liberal intellectuals on their way to be realized even if but partially, the Moderates gave up their opposition to the government. They condemned the uncompromising attitude of the Extremists as imprudent and detrimental to the constructive progress of the Indian nation. *The Congress of 1918* was totally deserted by the Moderates. Gandhi himself, who as a member of the Government Commission appointed for making inquiries in connection with the agrarian troubles in Champaran, had glimpsed the volcano of discontent seething under the hitherto unruffled surface of the society, expressed a favourable opinion about the Reforms.

But the government was smelling trouble in the air. The first indications of an imminent mass upheaval were to be noticed in the general restiveness all over the country. It was neither from the compromising rich bourgeoisie, nor from the objectively impotent but apparently aggressive orthodox nationalism of the lower middle-class intellectuals involuntarily under the influence of the forces of reaction, that the gravest danger was to be expected. Placating the Moderates did not put an end to the possibility of troubles from other quarters. Prolonged economic exploitation intensified during the war, had exhausted the traditional patience of the people.

large masses of whom had been herded into the new industrial centres, where they found themselves in conditions worse than before. In the beginning of the war, several thousand workers came back from the United States of America where they had emigrated. These emigrants had experienced a higher standard of living in America ; they had seen that the ordinary comforts available for the working-men in other countries were luxuries in comparison with the miserable condition of the Indian toiler, urban as well as rural. Besides, while in America they had received political ideas of a revolutionary trend. They all came back with the intention of overthrowing the British domination. In this they had failed, since the conspiracies of the secret revolutionary organizations were frustrated in the earlier part of the war. But these returned emigrants did more revolutionary service than to take part in an abortive insurrection. Originally they all belonged to the poor peasantry of the north, especially the Punjab. The attempt to organize insurrections being frustrated, these returned emigrants all went straight into their villages with their new vision and experience acquired in foreign countries. It was not long before their spirit was caught by the people they came in contact with. There was another factor which rendered similar services in awakening the mass energy. More than a million Indian soldiers were sent out to different fronts where they fought side by side with Europeans. In the towns and villages of Europe they found even the poorest people living in a condition better than theirs at home. These soldiers were also coming back changed men. The imminent demobilization would scatter these discontented and disturbing elements broadcast all over the country.

These were the potential sources of the impending danger. Discontent was no longer confined within the small middle class; it had penetrated the villages, it had rudely shaken the resignation of the masses of Indian people. This situation had not been created by the agitation of the bourgeois democrats, nor by the aggressive nationalism of the religious orthodox. It was brought about by the development of objective forces.

Therefore it could not be handled successfully merely by placating the Moderates and persecuting the Extremists. At last there was the menace of a huge popular upheaval, caused essentially by economic exploitation not alone of imperial capital, but by native agencies as well. The imminent popular upheaval was a social outburst—the rise of a socially revolutionary force uncompromising, unrelenting, implacable, which would mark the commencement of the inevitable class-war.

Success in 'rallying the Moderates' did not insure the situation in face of this threatening mass-revolt, which would add immense strength to the Extremists. In fact the latter could take such a firm stand on their political demands only because encouraged, though unconsciously, by the strength that would accrue to the nationalist movement as a result of a mass upheaval. The religious ideology of the orthodox Extremists was capable of influencing the zeal of the ignorant masses in the first phases of their struggle. The result would be an immense strengthening of the national movement, under the leadership of the Extremist Party. Mass revolt provoked by a still confused class antagonism, could be easily diverted into the channel of anti-British sentiment. The National Congress threatened to become a really powerful body, in spite of the defection of its founders.

Consequently, the government launched upon a dual policy; it tried to combat the Indian movement with a double-edged sword. It adopted the policy of conciliation and concession on the one hand, and brutal repression on the other. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms typified the former, while the latter was ominously heralded by the introduction of the Rowlatt Bill in the Legislature. The apprehension of a great popular outburst, which induced the government to pass emergency legislation putting the country practically under Martial law, was manifest in the following words uttered by the Viceroy in defending the Rowlatt Bill in the Legislative Council. He sounded the alarm saying : "The reaction against all authority that has manifested itself in many parts of the civilized world are unlikely to leave India entirely untouched

and the powers of evil are still abroad". The powers which the Viceroy had in mind were evidently discovered outside the camp of the Extremists, whose following was still confined to a small section of the lower middle-class. The alarm was sounded in the beginning of 1919. The echoes of the Russian Revolution had been for sometime reverberating upon the horizon of India; the news of the great upheaval of the European working class as expressed in the German, Hungarian, and Bavarian revolutions was not altogether unknown; serious troubles were brewing among the toiling masses of Japan. There was indeed ample reason for the British government to be anxious about its position and to take precautions. The Rowlatt Bill was enacted in the face of unanimous opposition from all shades of nationalist opinion. Even the elected Indian members of the Legislative Council voted *en bloc* against it.

The agitation against the Rowlatt Bill brought Gandhi prominently into the political field. So far he had kept himself practically aloof from any noteworthy political activities. Gandhi had seen active demonstrations of mass action in South Africa, where he had led the struggle of the Indian emigrants. His recent works in connection with the agrarian revolts in Champaran had also given him a good idea of mass psychology. All his accumulated experience was brought to bear upon the mass energy on the eve of an outburst in India. While the political leaders, Moderates and Extremists alike, were agitating against the projected coercive measures, there appeared on the scene the magnetic personality of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, an ardent apostle of religious nationalism and a bitter opponent of what he called the 'Satanic Western Civilization' which was being feverishly introduced into India in the form of large capitalist industries. By inaugurating the campaign of *Satyagraha* (passive resistance to evil), an active vent was given to the Opposition, which could thus transcend the limits of mere indignation meetings and passing resolutions of protest. Devoid of any other weapons to fight the British government, the Indian people were provided in the campaign of passive resistance with a way of

making their energy felt by the opponent. Gandhi postulated that the Indian people would "refuse to obey these laws and such other laws", but would at the same time "faithfully follow the truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property". With this vow a committee was organized, which replied to the enactment of the Rowlatt Bill by calling a *hartal* (national strike). Everybody should cease work; all shops should be closed; all business should be suspended.

For the first time in its history, the Indian national movement entered into the period of active struggle, and in doing so it had to call upon the masses of the people. A national strike cannot be carried on with any effect by the lower middle-class, which too is very small in India. The time for mass-action was ripe. Economic forces, together with other objective causes had created an atmosphere in which a spontaneous response could be expected to a call for a national strike. Had this step been taken several years earlier, there would have been hardly any response. Gandhi did not think of backing up the Congress-League demands of 1916 by a *hartal*, not even by a big demonstration. Great ideas originate and are determined by the prevailing material conditions. In 1919 the state of affairs was such that the idea of a national strike could be conceived. A considerable portion of the population was in an inflammable state of mind. There had been various strikes in the industrial centres. The call for a *hartal* was enthusiastically responded to by the working-class. It was a great mass upheaval, an essentially socio-economic, and not a mere national demonstration, that led up to the Punjab massacres culminating in Amritsar. The powder magazine was there; Gandhi set fire to it.

This mighty mass revolt scared the Moderates into the shelter of their spiritual home, under the throne of the Imperial bourgeoisie. They were not slow in issuing a manifesto condemning the *hartal* which, apparently a demonstration against the government, was essentially a great social upheaval—the prelude to the coming class-struggle. Gandhi himself appeared



to have surmised instinctively the dangerous character to be eventually assumed by the mighty forces he was instrumental in invoking. Therefore from the very beginning he firmly took his stand on the ground that 'truth' should be followed by 'refraining from violence to property'. This strong instinct of preserving property rights above all betrays the class affiliation of Gandhi, in spite of his pious outbursts against the sordid materialism of modern civilization. His hostility to capitalist society is manifestly not revolutionary, but reactionary. He believes in the sanctity of private property, but seeks to prevent its inevitable evolution to capitalism. In the years following the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain was swept by a wave of anti-machine philosophy; but it was a revolutionary movement, because the attack against private property was its feature. A radical cure of that civilization so heartily hated by Gandhi, can be effected, not by returning to a backward stage of society based upon private property, but by eliminating property rights root and branch. And before being altogether eliminated, private property must go through successive stages of evolution, the highest being capitalism. Gandhi took his stand on dangerous ground. He embodies simultaneously Revolution and Reaction, he must perish in the fierce clash.

Before spreading to the Punjab, the strike was most successful in the industrial districts of the province of Bombay. Several hundred workers in the textile factories mostly owned and managed by native capitalists, not a few of whom were Congressmen, were in a state of open revolt, which could be put down only by the free use of machine guns and bombing planes. It was clearly demonstrated that the military machine of the state would always protect the propertied bourgeoisie against any riotous action of the ignorant mob. Gandhi himself confessed that he had underestimated the 'forces of evil' he helped let loose upon the respectable bourgeois order of society. Therefore, while in those stirring days of 1919, there were about fifty thousand textile workers on strike in Ahmedabad, and the railway

workers were holding up the traffic in order to prevent the rushing of troops to suppress the Punjab revolts by wholesale massacre and terrorism. Gandhi could be found 'co-operating' with the 'Statanic Government' in restoring order in his home town (Ahmedabad).

The unerring instinct for safeguarding class-interest reigns supreme, even in the prophet of spiritual civilization. The valuable properties of the Gujarati capitalists—notorious for sucking the blood of the Indian people by means of usury—were endangered by the 'infuriated mob'. Was it possible for any respectable bourgeois believing in the sanctity of private property, to stand aloof? Not only did Gandhi rush to the rescue, but under his presidency the Satyagraha Committee ruled a temporary suspension of 'civil disobedience' and ordered every patriot to follow the noble example of their leader in helping the government restore order.

The response of the Muslim population to the Khilafat propaganda also showed that the country was undergoing a great social transformation. The bulk of the Indian Muslims had never been well informed of, much less interested in Pan-Islamism, which remained a fashionable cult among the reactionary intellectuals. The fact that the declaration of *Jehad* during the Tripoli and Balkan Wars, as well as the entrance of Turkey into the great European conflict, had left the Muslim masses of India practically unmoved, betrayed the weakness of the assumed religious solidarity on which Pan-Islamism was based. It proved that what could be possible several hundred years ago, had become untenable in the twentieth century. It was not the dismemberment of the Turkish empire that agitated the Indian Muslims in 1919, when they revolted en masse with the rest of the Indian oppressed class. Their revolt was also brought about by material causes, religion having very little to do with it essentially. Hunger, intensified exploitation and above all the undermining of old property relations by the growth of native capitalism—all these factors contributed to the rebellious mood of the Indian masses, Muslims as well as Hindus. The agitation against the Rowlatt Bill and subse-

quently the Khilafat propaganda were successful in stirring up a tremendous popular movement, because the ground had been prepared by these fundamental socio-economic causes.

The fiasco of the Hijrat (Khilafat emigration) revealed the superficiality of religious sentiment, held to be so strong among the Indian Muslims. It showed that movements which fail to take deeper causes into consideration and which are based on supposed forces, whose original vitality has been lost in the process of social evolution, are doomed to failure. The best that can be achieved by such movements is futile demonstrations, which but dissipate popular energy and provide some bitter and costly experiences.

By an ukase issued by the high priesthood, the faithful were enjoined to leave the Kafir-ridden India and migrate to the Muslim countries or to swell the forces of Ghazi Mustapha Kemal Pasha. This religious edict was very dubiously responded to. Hardly thirty thousand out of the seventy million Muslims of India took part in the holy Hijrat, and more than 90 per cent of these emigrants did not go further than a few dozen miles beyond the Indo-Afghan frontier. The treatment received from the government of the first Muslim country encountered convinced them of their error and of the advisability of returning home. A close investigation showed that in spite of the religious ardour which undoubtedly existed on the surface, it was some material motive or other which actuated almost every one of those emigrants. It was not so much the Fatwa of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as the declaration of the Afghan Ameer to the effect that every Indian Muslim coming to his territories would be given free land as well as some working capital, that induced most of the emigrants to leave home. Of course, there were some young visionaries among them, and a number of daring adventures bent on making fame and fortune upon some unknown battle-field.

No, it was not the indignation over the violation of the Khilafat, nor the capture of the Holy places by the infidel that agitated the Muslim masses of India. They felt the impulse of the same social upheaval as shook their Hindu compatriots

from their age-long resignation and apathy. The great wave of mass energy, which threw Gandhi and his colleagues in the national movement on to the towering crest of leadership, was raised neither by the awakening national consciousness of the Hindus, nor by the religious fervour of the Muslims. It was the revolt of the exploited masses, still unconscious of their purpose. It was provoked neither by the personality, however magnetic, of a prophet preaching a bankrupt gospel, nor by the injunction of the theological authorities, nor by the equivocal opposition of the bourgeois nationalist. The dynamic causes had been accumulating for a long time ; the fire of discontent and unrest had been smoldering under the surface for years. At last the flames of open revolt broke out under such auspices that its essential social significance could be confused with wild political demonstrations. It is not the awakening national consciousness, but the socio-economic struggle of the exploited masses that has lent apparent potentiality to the political movement of the bourgeoisie. But the revolt of the exploited masses cannot be for any length of time a dependable force behind the nationalism of the bourgeoisie. It was possible in the past, in countries in which different socio-political institutions obtained ; in which the liberal democratic movement of the national bourgeoisie was based upon class antagonism. But the world has changed since then, and the relations between the classes of Indian society today do not correspond to those of central Europe in the forties and fifties of the nineteenth century, nor to those of the British American Colonies towards the end of the eighteenth century, nor to those of the Italian states in the sixties. Bitter war between the classes is being waged all over the world. This world situation cannot but be reflected in the Indian movement. The awakening of mass energy, which has strengthened the movement for national liberation and which alone is capable of making this movement an success, at the same time weakens the position of the bourgeois nationalist movement.

The present situation in India is not unique in history. It is a stage of social development marked by a sudden and rapid

introduction of modern means of production, resulting in a dislocation of the *status quo*, economic as well as territorial, of the population. Great Britain passed through a similar epoch in the years following the Reform Bill of 1832 and leading up to the Chartist Movement. But the same development cannot be expected to take place in India, although similar social and political tendencies are to be noticed in the movement. The propertied middle-class, which eventually dominated the situation in England as a result of the Reform Bill and the failure of the Chartist Movement, does not occupy an identical socio-political position in India today. The struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie is not against a government controlled by rich landed aristocracy with strong feudal traditions ; it is against the highest form of capitalism in an extremely critical moment of its existence. Consequently, there is a great possibility of compromise in this struggle.

Democracy, the slogan of the English middle-class in the days of the Reform Bill and Chartism, has lost all its illusive charms. After the bitter experience of almost a century, it stands today naked in its true character, which is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie heading towards a plutocratic Imperialism. The struggle of the English bourgeoisie took place when capitalist society was in the process of building. The Nationalism of India tends towards the aggrandisement of the native bourgeoisie at a time when capitalism has gone bankrupt—when it is collapsing under its own contradictions all over the world. In the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, the bourgeois class was a revolutionary factor in England as well as on the Continent. It was struggling to build a new civilization on the ruins of the old. To their great misfortune, this much cannot be said of the bourgeois nationalists of India. They have appeared too late on the scene. It is not their fault. They did not choose to be late. They were kept back by Imperialism. They are late, all the same; and, therefore, cannot be expected to play the same role as their kind played in other countries in more opportune times. In relation to the past and present Indian society taken as a whole, they are undoubtedly revolutionary. But they are trying

to build what is crumbling the world over. They happen to be at the head of a revolutionary movement at a period when their class has ceased to be a revolutionary social force

The Indian bourgeoisie today stands between two fires: one just beginning to break into flames still clouded with thick smoke, the other large and awe inspiring, but its imposing glare is not that of living flames—it is of burning embers, to be soon covered with ashes. On one side is the great social upheaval fomented by the rising tide of mass energy which it endeavours to manipulate according to the requirement of its own benefit and convenience ; on the other side stands the Imperial Power intent upon maintaining its political and economic hegemony, but at the same time showing inclinations to compromise. The unbridled advance of the first, which alone can deliver a death blow to Imperial domination, a spells serious menace to the designs of the nationalist bourgeoisie ; while to enter into partnership with Imperial capitalist is not a bad prospect. But the Indian bourgeoisie, by itself, is too weak to make the Imperialist Government pay heed to its demands. Therefore it must depend upon mass action for imposing its will. This is playing with fire, digging one's own grave. It has been demonstrated on various occasions during the last three years, that the mass movement cannot always be kept within the limits set according to the convenience of the bourgeoisie. Signs are already to be seen that the workers and peasants, who are steadily emerging from the first confusion of a great social upheaval, do not find the Congress and Khilafat programmes include their interests. The inevitable consequence of these tendencies is the eventual divorce of the mass movement from bourgeois leadership. In that case, bourgeois nationalism will end in a compromise with Imperial supremacy, and the liberation of India will be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants, consciously organized and fighting on the grounds of class-struggle.

## **What do we want?**

**M. N. Roy**

### **1. Political Independence**

We want, first of all and as soon as possible, political independence, because it is the first step towards our goal. But we must know that merely the overthrow of foreign rule will not bring us all we lack today and all that is indispensable in order that the masses of the Indian people shall live like human beings. Why are we determined to overthrow the British Government? Because, it is based on the principle against which everyone who lives by honest labour must rebel. It is based upon the right of the possessing class to exploit the expropriated toiler.

The task of a government is to administer the affairs of the country. If the government is not a part of the country, it can not execute its task in accordance with the interests of the inhabitants. In order to safeguard the people's interests, the government should be controlled by them ; it should represent the people. In other words, the people of a country administer their own affairs through the medium of a government which is constituted by means of elected representatives ; any government not so constituted, not based on the principle of elected representation, cannot take care of the interests of the community.

The British Government, which has been ruling India for more than a hundred and fifty years, is not a part of the country ; it does not represent the Indian people whose affairs it administers. It is not constituted of representatives of the people. The British Government rules over India not for the

sole purpose of administering the affairs of the Indian people but *with the object of exploiting them*. The present government of India is not elected by the people of India ; it is appointed by the capitalist class of England, which makes profit by exploiting the labour of the Indian and English working class. We are rebelling against the present government *because it lets the British capitalist rob the Indian people*. A government which does not administer the affairs of the country in the welfare of the people of that country has no right to exist, and must therefore be overthrown. Foreign domination must be replaced by a national government. India must be governed by her own people, who will elect their own representatives to look after their interests and welfare.

The concern of British Government is to see that the British merchants and manufacturers, who rule England today, get the greatest amount of profit by robbing the Indian people. The fact that the Viceroy is an Englishman and all the high government officials are also Englishmen does not mean that India is ruled by the English people as a whole. No, India is ruled by a very small section of the English nation—the small section which makes profit by exploiting the Indian people and natural resources of our country, and which is called *the capitalist ruling-class*. It is this capitalist class which carries on trade, owns railways, mines, and plantations, and makes money by robbing the Indian worker and peasant of the fruits of his labour. It is this class which rules not only India, but England and the whole British Empire today. *The British Government is composed of the representatives of this powerful class of exploiters, who control the affairs of the Empire in their own interests.*

The same thing may happen when India will be governed by the Indians. The fact that an Indian gentleman may sit where Lord Reading sits today; that Indian officials administer the affairs of the country instead of English ones ; that all the governors of the provinces will be Indians ; that all the magistrates, collectors and judges will also be Indians, does



not necessarily mean that the country will be governed in the interests of the entire people of India.

Why is this so? *It is because the interests of all the people in any given country are not identical.* The Zamindars of Bengal, the Taluqdars of Oudh, the Patwaris of the Punjab, the millowners of Bombay and the Brahmins of Madras are all inhabitants of India ; they are all a part of the Indian nation and belong to the same nationality. So also are the tenants of the Zamindars, Taluqdars and Patwaris in the various Indian provinces ; the factory-hands of Bombay the Pariahs of Madras—all are a part of the Indian people, belonging to the same nationality. But can we believe that simply because they belong to the same country, they have the same interests? No, of course not. It cannot be so. The Zamindars and Taluqdars cannot continue to occupy their present position of rich and idle parasites *unless there exists a class of people to cultivate the soil and pay them rents and tributes.* The mill-owners cannot exist *unless they have tens of thousands of workers to run their factories.* The Brahmins cannot maintain their superior religious and social position *unless a certain section of the population is held in intellectual darkness and social slavery.* All these people, the Zamindars, Taluqdars, merchants, manufacturers and parasitic priests, belong to the same class of exploiters whose interest it is to live at the expense of another and larger section of the population—the Indian workers and peasants.

It is clear then that the interests of all the people belonging to the same country are not identical. The interests of the rich are opposed to those of the poor ; those of the landlord are not the same as those of his tenants ; the interests of the mill-owner are contrary to those of his factory-hands. Why? *Because one class thrives on the exploitation of the other.*

The present government represents the British capitalist class, whose interest it is to exploit the labour of the Indian working-class, on whose wealth it fattens. When the British Government is overthrown, and a government of the Indian landlords, merchants and manufacturers is established in its

place, will that change the present miserable condition of the Indian workers and peasants? No, for the interests of these two classes are not the same. A government composed of the upper and middle classes of the Indian people, in spite of being a national government, will protect only the interests of those classes, and not of the exploited majority. The power of the Zamindar will increase; more profits will swell the purse of the mill-owner ; the Indian middle-class intellectuals will fall heir to the fat government jobs today reserved for Civil Service men imported from Great Britain. How can this in any way alter the existing economic condition of the majority of the Indian people? In what way will this change of English rulers for Indians improve the lot of the toiling peasant and starving wage-slave?

### **Outlines of Swaraj**

Thus it is necessary for us to enquire what kind of national government will be established in the country after the foreign domination is overthrown. We cannot remain satisfied with the vague formula of Swaraj as our goal. It is necessary to define Swaraj ; to know what definite provisions will be made by the national government to improve the condition of the Indian masses.

The national government must represent the interests of the majority of the Indian people in order to protect the national interests. Who are the majority of the people of India? Who constitute the backbone of the nation? Is it the idle landlords and rich capitalists or the industrious workers and peasants? *Ninety out of every hundred people in India belong either to the poor peasantry or the exploited city workers.* These are the people who produce everything necessary to the life and comfort of the nation ; they till the soil, weave the cloth, build the houses, construct roads and railways, dig mines, run the trains and ships. It is they who conduce to the daily activity and progress of society, therefore *the welfare of her peasantry and working class constitutes the national welfare of India.*

This being the case, the national government of India will not be really representative unless it is controlled in the interests of and by the majority of the Indian people, the Indian workers and peasants. A government which represents the productive element of the society is the only truly national government which will foster and defend the interests of the majority. The capitalist employer and parasitic landlord cannot protect the interests of the productive classes, since the former thrives on the exploitation of the latter. Government power in the hands of the exploiting class will be wielded for the benefit of that class alone. The condition of the masses will be very little improved unless such improvement is guaranteed beforehand by a clear statement of national reconstruction put forward as a political programme to be fulfilled after the overthrow of foreign rule.

*We demand the formation of such a programme of national reconstruction, which shall contain the following measures:*

1. *That our National State (Swaraj) will be based on the principle of Universal Suffrage.*
2. *That the principal means of production, distribution and exchange (land, mines, factories, railways, waterways, etc.) will be owned by the Democratic State and operated under the control of Workers' Committees, elected by and from among the workers employed therein.*
3. *That Landlordism be abolished, and the ownership of land be vested in the State, which will distribute it among those who cultivate it.*

We demand these things in order that those who work shall enjoy the fruits of their labour, in order to bring the exploitation of man by man to an end.

The workers and peasants of India want to conquer Swaraj because it will open to them those avenues of progress now closed by the foreign ruler. The national government which replaces foreign rule must not administer the country in the sole interests of the Zamindars, factory-owners and other rich people. It must be the champion of the toiling masses, who have been exploited for so long by foreign imperialism. We

will not overthrow one exploiter to put a new one in his place, simply because the latter happens to be born in the same country as ourselves, belongs to the same race and speaks the same tongue. It hurts just as much to be kicked by my own brother as by an Englishman in the street.

The British Government is the rule of the rich propertied class over the workers who live by their honest toil. That is the reason we are against. It exploits our people, therefore we are determined to overthrow it. It is not only because it is foreign that we are rebelling against it ; we are struggling to end it because it represents the class which grows rich by exploiting the toiling masses, by robbing them, by depriving them of the fruits of their labour. The British Government in India is a part of the capitalist system, which makes the workers live like animals while the idle roll in luxury.

The masses of our people are striving for something human; there is nothing spiritual or sublime in it. they produce everything, but live in misery and die of starvation. It is this state of affairs we are out to fight. Every human being requires something to live on. He has to struggle for his existence if he does not wish to die. The Indian people are no exception and if they are to live a human life, they must struggle to conquer that fight. This is the true nature of the struggle we are involved in—to *conquer the right to live as human beings*. This is the motive force of the movement for national liberation. Before we talk about the spiritual uplift of the Indian people, we must look at their material existence. Do the majority of our people live a human life. No. Look at the places they call their homes. They are nothing but dirty dens, unfit even for animals to live in! Pet dogs, horses and other domestic animals belonging to the capitalist class, British as well as Indian, are kept in rooms which are heaven compared to what the Indian workers and peasants live in. Just imagine their food! The pet dogs of the master class get fresh meat every day, and what do they eat ? It may be said that their rooms, their food, their clothing are so miserable because they cannot earn more. But why do they

earn so little? Because somebody deprives them of the greater part of what they produce, of what rightfully belongs to them, because it is created by their honest labour. The wages of the worker are so low because his employer grows rich on profits. The peasant lives in hunger, borrows money to buy food and pay his rent and taxes ; often he sells his plough and cattle to liquidate his debt, and eventually he is driven off his land. Why is this so? Why should he who makes the earth yield heaps of food grains live in hunger? *Because the greater part of what his labour produces is taken away from him in the shape of rent, taxes, interest and other tributes to the landlord, and government and money-lender, who do no productive work.*

It is this system of exploitation and expropriation which is responsible for the present miserable condition of the majority of the Indian people. True freedom of the human being cannot be realized so long as society is based upon the right of man to exploit his fellowmen. The British Government upholds this system; therefore we want to overthrow it. We are fighting not for political independence and self-government alone, but a Swaraj that will enable the Indian people to advance on the road to greater freedom in every field, social, economic and political. Foreign rule must be ended, and national self-government put in its place. But the administration of independent India must not be allowed to fall completely into the hands of the native exploiting class. The government must be controlled by those who form the majority of the nation, and on whom the economic life of society depends, without whose labour no progress can be made. India should be liberated from foreign rule, not only to secure a greater scope for native capital and a more comfortable life for the upper classes, but in order to conquer a new life for the toiling masses as well. We are determined to free the Indian masses not from foreign exploitation alone but from all sorts of exploitation. The Indian people have begun a struggle which will not end with the attainment of political freedom alone.

## 2. Economic Emancipation

We will win political freedom as a step towards economic emancipation. Everybody, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, fights for his own interests. But the interests of every man are not the same. The interest of the rich cannot be the same as that of the poor ; that of the employer cannot be identical with the interest of his workers, nor that of the Zamindar with his tenant. If the poor worker fights to improve his miserable condition, he comes immediately into conflict with the rich because the poverty of the one can be cured only by limiting the power of the other to rob and exploit him. The wages and living conditions of the city worker cannot be improved without reducing the profit of the employer ; the lot of the agricultural classes can be lightened only at the expense of the landlord.

A nation struggles for its independence, but since every nation is divided into two classes, viz, the property-owning and the propertyless, the employer and the employee, the landowner and the cultivator, the capitalist and the worker—the object of this struggle for national independence cannot be the same for both these classes into which the people of every country are divided. The rich man wants Swaraj because under it he expects to grow richer. The factory-owner will build more factories and employ more workers to produce more goods and make more profit under the protection of the national government. The British Government does not let him build as many factories as he would like, because the English merchants and manufacturers want to sell to the Indian people the cloth, shoes, and other articles made in English factories. Therefore the Indian factory-owners want Swaraj. When India has a government controlled by the native propertied classes, the Indian capitalists will be helped instead of hindered in building more factories, employing more workers, producing more goods and making more profit.

The present government is foreign. The huge amount of money that it collects as revenue from land is sent to England. When the country will be free, this money will go to the Indian

Zamindars. The profit that the English capitalist class makes by ruling India will be inherited by the Indian landlords, merchants and manufacturers when the foreign domination will be overthrown, when the English will no longer rule the country. But what will the common people get from this Swaraj? What will be their share in this freedom for which we are fighting, and to win which the blood of the Indian masses must be shed in torrents?

### Theory of National Wealth Wrong

We are told that the industrial and commercial development of India will increase the national wealth, and that consequently, the economic conditions of all classes will be improved. But is it so? Let us examine some facts. Today India has to pay an enormous sum of money to buy the cloth imported from England. Thus it is argued that if the cloth we need is manufactured in this country, the money that today goes to England will stay in the country. Very good. But who pays this money? *The people who buy the cloth*, that is the common people, the workers and peasants, contribute a very large portion of this huge sum that goes out to England in payment for the cloth imported into India. Now when the cloth will be manufactured in the country, it surely will not be given free to the people who now buy it, they will have to buy it just as they always did. In other words, when the Indian masses buy country-made cloth instead of the imported commodity, their money will go into the pockets of the native merchant and manufacturer instead of to the British capitalist. How will this fact make any appreciable difference in the economic condition of the common people? The same argument holds good for other industries. Some people say that the foreign cloth can be driven out of India by the revival of the Charkha and handloom. These people are visionaries. Their economics are wrong and they are socially reactionary. First of all, machine-made commodities cannot be ousted from the market by handmade stuff, which can always be undersold by the former, on account of lower cost of pro-

duction and increased output. So those are mistaken who argue that the Charkha and handloom will drive away foreign cloth and the money thus saved will be evenly distributed among all the people. Then, supposing that handicraft production will be able to supply the demands of the country in sufficient quantities and at a low enough price so as to throw the machine-made imported commodities off the market, even this will not mean an equal distribution of the national wealth. The Charkha and looms will be owned by private individuals ; cotton will be produced by people interested in selling it at the highest possible price ; the land on which cotton will be grown will carry rent. Thus all the elements of trade are latent in this primitive means of production, a return to which is held by many of our leaders to be the panacea for all the present troubles and miseries of the Indian people. And as long as all the economic elements giving impetus to trade are there, trade will develop and expand, changing the primitive individualistic character of industry into manufacture, machinefactory and large-scale production concentrated in the hands of a few who possess capital to purchase raw materials, machinery and hire labour just as it happened in Europe during the Industrial Revolution. The result will be the same in India as it was in Europe—*capitalist industry will expropriate the worker whose labour produces commodities and the profits of production wrung from the unpaid labour of the worker will go to enrich the idle employer*. So under no conditions can the theory of an equal distribution of national wealth be put into practice.

*The increase of national wealth means the enrichment of the native propertied class, and the enrichment of this class means the expropriation and pauperization of the producing class.*

The industrial development of India under a national government will mean more extensive and intensive exploitation of the labour power of the working-class. The building of more factories will require the employment of more labourers.



Increased profit can be made only by paying lower wages. If the textile production of the country is increased, raw material must also become more plentiful and cheaper. This necessity will affect the economic position of the peasants who grow cotton. Methods of large-scale production will have to be introduced into agriculture to improve the quality and increase the quantity of the produce. This will mean the concentration of land in the hands of capitalist farmers, producing raw materials not for the use of the village weaver as in the olden days, but for exchange on the capitalist market. Concentration of land takes place only by ousting the poor peasantry, who are driven to the industrial centres to live the life of wage-slaves in the great factories.

*Extensive industrialization of a country—the process by which national wealth is increased—means the liberation of the peasantry from feudal bondage, the expropriation of the free cultivator, the gradual elimination of individual production and the transformation of the pauperized peasants and artisans into proletarian wage-slaves.*

This is exactly what is going to happen in India. National freedom will open up avenues for the aggrandizement of the propertied upper classes. But will that satisfy the requirements of the common people? Are we to call upon the peasants to join us in the struggle for Swaraj in order that they may be driven off their land or continue to live as now, completely at the mercy of the landlord, on the morrow of the establishment of Swaraj? Are we to call upon the working masses to follow us in the fight against foreign rule, only to see them exploited by the native instead of the foreign capitalists? This is surely not what we want. This is not a revolutionary ideal. If this is our goal, if this is the Swaraj we are fighting for, then we can abandon the stormy path of non-cooperation and follow after the co-operating Moderates, who are also striving for the same thing and who lead us there in a much more orderly and peaceful manner. But we do not want to follow the Moderates. Why? Because there is a difference between their ideal and ours. *The Swaraj that*

*we strive for then must be something more than a national government, under which the Indian propertied classes will thrive at the expense of the toiling masses.*

It becomes necessary, therefore, to define what are the interests of the common people. It is necessary to know clearly for what we are fighting. It is necessary to put before the Indian workers and peasants a programme of action. Above all, it is necessary for us to know that what we want is not the same thing that the rich and propertied classes of India want.

We are fighting for the economic interests of the Indian masses, which are distinct from those of the classes that thrive by robbing them.

It has already been seen that we want to overthrow British rule because under it, the masses of our people are ground down in chronic poverty. We are convinced that unless the chains of capitalist imperialism are broken, there is no chance of improving the economic condition of the Indian people. But the Swaraj that will put the native exploiting class in the place of the foreigner will not secure what we strive for. The Swaraj needed for the welfare of the Indian masses—of those labouring in the factories and toiling on the fields is not the Swaraj that will satisfy the aspirations of the propertied upper-class and prosperous intellectuals.

In order that Swaraj may bring about such radical economic changes as will improve the life of the working class, it must be something more than a political makeshift or a spiritual formula. It must signify certain principles of economic reconstruction and social readjustment of the entire nation. The progressive upper classes of India are also oppressed by foreign rule in so far as free progress is not permitted to them. These classes have also a part to play in the general scheme of our social revolution. Their free development will break down all the old bondages of social conservatism and religious prejudice, bonds which can only be broken by the free development of economic forces by the rise of higher means of production. Therefore, *we must lead the masses of our people to support the progressive upper and middle classes in their*

*struggle against imperialistic domination. But we must never for a moment confuse our goal with theirs. They want to go a certain distance and stop. As soon as they have conquered political power, as soon as they have become the rulers of the country in place of the overthrown foreigner, or as soon as the latter makes them sufficient concessions of power, they will stop all revolutionary agitation. It is our part to push them forward by strengthening their demands with the support of revolutionary masses. But this support must not be given unconditionally, since we must always remember that their goal and ours is not the same. We must support their demands on condition that certain demands of our own are included in their programme. We must make them declare that Swaraj will guarantee the substantial economic improvement of the working-class.*

Our demands should be so formulated as to secure as much as possible for the masses in return for their support of the nationalist cause. Our slogans should be such as will appeal to the imagination and desires of the exploited masses. We must put forward demands which can be easily understood by the most ignorant worker, and which will help him to see that such a Swaraj means something more for him than the Paradise of the propertied classes or the Utopia of the Social reactionaries. Our programme must interpret Swaraj according to the needs and desires of the wide masses of the population, it must advocate concrete improvement in the economic condition of the working masses. We must define Swaraj to mean a state of national independence which will guarantee to the Indian workers and peasants a higher standard of living and the opportunity for further progress, free from the exploitation of capitalism. Such a Swaraj will open up a new vision of life to the Indian people, and such a Swaraj is alone worth fighting for.

### **Abolition of Landlordism**

We demand the expropriation of all big estates belonging to the Zamindars, Taluqdars, Jagirdars and other aristocrats and

feudal lords. The land is to bear fruit for all who labour, but none of these idle rich men do anything to make the land yield harvests. It is the poor peasants who do all the work. Why then should these idle aristocrats own the land and make the cultivator pay them rent? There are lakhs of peasant families living on two or three *bighas* of land, whereas almost one-half of the whole country belongs to a small number of the idle and corrupt landlords. Swaraj must put an end to this inequitable distribution of land—a distribution that is based on the principle of exploitation. The land should be given to those who cultivate it. The peasants must organize village councils to enforce the expropriation of large estates, and these village councils, composed of all the poor and landless peasants, should take charge of the redistribution of the land. The expropriated landlords, village traders, money-lenders and all others owning capital or large properties should be excluded from these village councils. The reason for such exclusion is plain. It is to protect the interests of the poor peasantry, freed from the age-long exploitation of landlordism, and to make the confiscation real. If legislative and executive power is not vested in the poor peasantry, they will be cheated by the cunning trader and money-lender, and a new class of land speculators will replace the old landlords.

The confiscation must be complete and unconditional. No compensation should be made, because in that case the confiscation will have no economic value. Who would pay this compensation? The Government? Where could the Government get the money? It would have to be raised by taxation. The expropriated landlords would hold heavy bonds and through these, control the Government. This would mean the same state of affairs as now prevails. We are against compensation because it nullifies the act of confiscation. You talk about 'justice' to the landlords. where is your sense of 'justice' now towards the expropriated peasants? There can be no talk of justice in what is an economic question, pure and simple. If we want the welfare of the peasant masses, the rights of landlordism must be unconditionally challenged and abrogated. A Swaraj

which does not put the welfare of the exploited masses above that of the privileged upper classes cannot be of any interest or concern to a revolutionary who strives for the political freedom of India, not for the sake of political freedom in itself, but as a necessary step towards the happiness of the majority of the Indian people, now sunk in an abyss of misery.

Our Agrarian Programme is *Unconditional Abolition of Landlordism, the national ownership of land and its distribution among the poor peasantry*. Our slogan is *confiscation without compensation*.

Our Agrarian Programme can only be executed by the expropriated peasantry itself. Thus we must popularize our programme in the villages and organize the poor peasantry into militant class-organisations which will carry on a continuous struggle against the *landlords, the usurers and speculating traders*.

### **Futility of Village Reform**

The attempts of some of our nationalists to revive the old Panchayats are reactionary. These attempts are not inspired by any revolutionary ideal, but by the desire to blunt the edge of the class-conflict, which is growing sharper every day. Neither will the reformist activities of the social workers do. To try to teach the pauperized peasantry self-help before they learn self-assertion is useless. It is like advising a man to cook his food tastefully to make up for deficiency in quantity. *The village cannot be reformed, because its economic basis is rotten.* Excessive and multifarious exploitation is the cause of the chronic poverty of the peasantry which requires a radical remedy. No patchwork will do. How can you save the peasant from pestilence by sinking a well or starting a charitable dispensary, when he falls so easily victim to any epidemic disease because of his undermined vitality, which in turn is produced by life-long malnutrition? How can you teach the peasant co-operation when the villages are infested with money-lenders and traders, with their thousand and one cunning schemes of exploitation, which they carry on with

the support of the local officials? In addition, so long as the peasantry will be submerged in debt as they are today, they will not be in a position to dispose of their products in a fair market. Excessive rents and taxes imposed alike by the Government and the landlord, force him into the clutches of the usurer and land-speculator; the only release is found in the slums of the large industrial cities. Burdened with heavy debts, which always increase, the majority of the peasants are forced to mortgage their own crops even before they are sown. How can you save them from this situation so long as the law sanctions even the worst forms of exploitation? While his crops are liable to be auctioned off by the court bailiff, or seized by the creditor before they are harvested, it is idle to preach to the peasant the magic charm of co-operative stores. Such movements will be encouraged by the landlords as well as by the Government because they are instrumental in pacifying the discontent of the peasantry. It is necessary to go deep into the root cause if we are sincerely fighting for the welfare of the peasantry, which constitute more than eighty per cent of our nation. The peasants are poor because a large part of what they produce is taken away from them in the form of rent, taxes, interests and contributions. Their poverty cannot be cured unless the system which sanctions and protects all these innumerable forms of robbery is changed. Reformist activities only help to perpetuate the system by teaching the peasant to make the best of the situation and to accept it as inevitable. *Thus reformism, besides being futile, is reactionary and counter-revolutionary.*

### **Militant Village Councils**

We are against the revival of the old Panchayats because they do not suit the present requirements. In former days, they were a politico-economic institution corresponding to a certain stage of economic development of the people. The Panchayat is a form of organization suitable to a community just emerging from a state of tribal communism. But this cannot be

said of the Indian village today, where private ownership prevails. When the village land was still held in common, the Panchayat functioned as the government of the community. The evolution of private property long ago destroyed the economic significance of this institution, and with the disappearance of its economic significance its political importance becomes nil. Today the Panchayat can have no juridical, legislative or administrative authority, because all these functions are vested in a government whose foundations do not rest on the Panchayat. The line that divides our present society into two great classes—viz., exploiter and exploited—runs also through every village community. *The Panchayat cannot eliminate this division, which is based upon private ownership.* If the Panchayat be elected by all the adult population of the village, it becomes nothing more nor less than a little Parliament, with all the limitations and abuses of parliamentary democracy latent within its organism. It is proven by experience in countries where this form of government prevails that parliamentary democracies do not by their very nature protect the interests of the working class, which is only able to wrest some rights for itself by the use of militant class-action. Therefore, the Panchayat will not solve the agrarian problem of the villages. It may possibly act as an arbitration court, but such courts have no possibility of changing the economic status of the peasantry.

The village councils which we propose to organize will be *militant class-organizations* which will represent, not the interests of the whole village population but those of the poor peasantry. Just as the nation is not a homogeneous whole with identical interests among all classes, so neither is the village community. A governing body composed of the landlord or his representative, the rich peasant proprietor, the money-lender, trader, artisan, poor peasant landless proletariat will surely not protect the interests of the last three named. Therefore, our organization will include only those expropriated elements that are constantly engaged in a struggle with the exploiting upper classes and their partisans.

A programme which expresses their immediate interests will be easily understood by the ignorant rural masses, and through this programme their struggle will be guided towards the wider channels of national liberation and complete social and economic emancipation. It is in the process of struggle itself that their revolutionary consciousness will be aroused. The fight against the money-lenders will bring them up against the government, personified in the law courts that protect the rights of the usurer to exact interest. The conflict with the landlords will draw the government into the field to protect the rights of the latter. Thus the necessity of overthrowing the foreign domination that upholds the present system which oppresses him will become forced upon the understanding of the peasantry.

It is thus we should organize the peasantry. Not by giving them "constructive programmes", not to teach them "self-help", not to tell them to spin after the hard day's labour in order to earn a few pice more, not to set up dummy arbitration courts without any authority to enforce their own decisions—but *to demand the reduction of rents and taxes, to back up such demands by refusing payment and resisting arbitrary collections, to organize mass demonstrations to protest against the imposition of indirect taxation such as the salt tax, against high prices, low wages and the payment of usury.* We must learn to direct the organized energy of the rural masses towards the redress of those innumerable immediate grievances which make their lives a burden.

Mass action thus begun will develop into organized agrarian strikes, into food riots, the plunder of corn-stocks and assaults upon large estates with the idea of confiscation. The down-trodden peasantry must be made conscious of their right to live like human beings and our propaganda should be aimed at making them understand that they should conquer this right by militant action. Such action, properly organized on a large scale, will arouse them from their age-long mental and spiritual slavery, and make them conscious of their own might. Reactionary pacifism must be



repudiated. What burst out spontaneously at Gorakhpur, Rae Bareilly, Chauri Chaura, Malabar, Central India, and what is going on in the Punjab must be developed by every possible means. Peasant revolts should spread like wild-fire from one end of the country to the other. We must formulate our programme to correspond to the economic interests of the masses, then go forward boldly with the programme till we reach our goal.

The Government of the people—a government which represents the interests of the majority—should not allow the backbone of our country, the peasantry, to be ground down in abject poverty. We want to see the life of the peasant improved. Why should those who produce food for the entire country remain eternally in the miserable condition they live in today? Science has shown how abundant harvests can be yielded from the land with little labour if modern methods are introduced into agriculture. A hundred years ago, people had to walk from one end of the country to the other. Merchandise was carried from province to province by horses, mules or camels. Today it is otherwise. Railway trains take people from Calcutta to Lahore in three days. Lakhs of maunds of merchandise are carried hundreds of miles without effort in a few hours. How much trouble has been saved! The work that formerly needed the labour of hundreds of men is done by one steam engine.

The same can be done in agriculture. With the aid of modern implements the peasant can cultivate his soil with much less labour. A plough driven by steam can take the place of at least a hundred of those we use now. Thus a steam-plough will free the peasant from an enormous amount of labour. On the other hand, it tills the land much better and faster, and makes it yield more crops. Instead of toiling from sunrise to sunset, the peasant need work but a few hours a day to secure a larger harvest. The rest of the time he can spend in play, amusement, rest and study, in developing the higher side of his nature which today he has no time for. Those pleasant aspects of life, enjoyed at present only by the idle rich, will then be within

the reach of all. Life will become an enjoyment and a blessing instead of a burden and a drudgery.

Thus we want the method of agriculture to be improved under Swaraj. But one may ask, "a steam plough, even a modern steel plough, costs so much that the ordinary peasant cannot buy it". Well, we are fighting for Swaraj, for our own government which will administer the country not in the interests of the foreign merchants and manufacturers, but for the benefit of the Indian people. The present government does not help the peasant to improve his condition, it extracts rent and taxes and leaves him to starve. This must not be the case under Swaraj. Our own government must care for the welfare of the people. Now the peasant cannot buy modern implements because he is poor. It is not his fault that he is poor ; he is made so by the exploitation of the foreign government and native Zamindar. We must set up such a government which will help the poor peasants buy modern agricultural machinery and improve their primitive agriculture. We will set up village councils. Not the old Panchayat over which the village bully ruled. Our councils will be elected by the poor peasants from among themselves and will administer the affairs of the village. The national government will buy modern agricultural implements and place them at the disposal of these village communities, which in their turn will rent these out to the peasants at a very moderate charge. As the village councils will be controlled by the peasants themselves, the rent will naturally be fixed according to their own capacity to pay. Thus the poverty of the peasant will no longer prevent him from obtaining the help of modern science and invention to free himself from his present misery.

Small plots of land cultivated independently by individual owners are not suitable for the use of modern agricultural machinery, which can be used to advantage only on large tracts of land. It is also true that the productivity of the soil cannot be very much increased under the primitive system of agriculture that prevails among our peasantry. Individual cultivation should be replaced by large-scale farming in order to raise the

productivity of the soil and utilize modern farm implements. Only thus can the maximum production be secured by the minimum labour. Large-scale farms, however, become vehicles of intensive exploitation if owned by private capitalists for their own profit. In order that the mass of the peasants should derive advantage from them, *these large-scale farms should be owned by the state and everybody who works on them should share equally in the produce.*

Individualism is the main trait of the peasant's character. Under the evolution of the system of private ownership, the old primitive tribal communism breaks down and the sense of private ownership of property becomes very strong in the peasant. Today, oppressed by the government and landlord, by the usurer and trader, this land-hunger is intensified. He hugs to his bosom the small plot of land which he possesses or imagines he possesses, and which is all that stands between him and starvation. His first instinct is to own the land which he tills. This psychology is bred by the economic law of his environment, and cannot be killed in a day. To work against it would be disastrous. We must therefore slowly proceed and by steps to train him to the idea of large-scale farming on the basis of social or community ownership. *The first act of the revolution must be to put him in possession of the land which he cultivates, whose final ownership should be declared vested in the state.*

In order to show the peasant the advantages of community ownership, communal agricultural farms should be started to serve as models under the direct supervision of government experts. Great estates now under a modern system of agriculture and tracts of waste land can be utilized for such communal farms, which will be controlled by the council of peasants who work on them.

### **Nationalization of Public Utilities**

Besides land, there are other institutions and properties used by everybody and which are indispensable to the life and progress of the nation. Such are the railways, canals, tele-

graphs, mines etc., which are known as public utilities. These public utilities should cease to be owned by private individuals for their own profit, but should be owned by the whole society. They have not been specially created by anyone. The workers have brought them into existence by dint of hard labour. Gold, copper, iron, coal and other minerals are dug out of the earth by the toil of the miners, who work like beasts of burden, while the rich owners make profit by selling the minerals. The worker who digs the coal out of the bowels of the earth has to pay for it if he wants a bucketful to cook his own food. This is nothing but robbery, and we are not going to let it continue under Swaraj. The railways, telegraphs, mines and canals should belong to the nation. No private individual should be allowed to make profit out of these public utilities. At present many railways, the canals and telegraphs do not belong to private persons, but neither do they belong to the nation. They are the property of the British Government which is controlled by the rich English bankers, merchants and manufacturers. This is no national ownership. If Swaraj means simply the transfer of the administration of country to the native capitalist class, the workers will not be benefited very much. In that case the railways, telegraphs, canals and mines will be given over to private owners who will operate them for their own profit. Our capitalist class has already registered its opinion against the state ownership of public utilities. They want to inherit the position occupied today by imperialist capital. Such a change of hands will swell the profits of those who are already rich, but what benefit will the workers get out of it? *We are against private ownership of public utilities. We demand their nationalization under Swaraj.*

### **Handicrafts versus the Machine**

We are told that it is a shame to put on foreign cloth, to use any article made in another country. Our leaders say that we must weave all the cloth we wear here in India; we must manufacture ourselves everything the nation needs. Very well.

We also agree that all foreign goods should be thrown out of the country. What follows this resolution? Big industries must be built in India to produce the goods formerly imported from outside. Hardly one-half the cloth needed by the people is manufactured inside the country; it is produced in the large factories as well as by the weavers in the village. Boycott of foreign cloth cannot be successful unless twice as much cloth is manufactured in the country. How can this be done? Our leaders find the solution in the Charkha. With this solution we cannot agree. First of all, as seen previously, we cannot compete successfully against machine-made products by primitive handicrafts. Then the progress of science has made the life of man more comfortable than in the ancient days. Modern machinery saves human labour. Why should a hundred people bend their backs before the loom when the same work can be done by one person with the help of a machine, which is also the creation of man? When men knew of no other way, they made the women spin with the primitive Charkha. Now the work of several hundred Charkhas can be done in the course of one hour by the use of machinery. Why should we condemn our womanhood to the ancient drudgery, which is no longer necessary?

Cloth produced in the factories by the use of machines is cheaper than that made on the handlooms. Machine-made articles are always cheaper than hand-made ones because of large-scale production, which increases the output and lowers the cost of each article. Machine-made cloth is also more comfortable to wear than khaddar, and why should we not be comfortable? We are human beings after all. If Swaraj wants to take us back to barbarism, we don't want it. Why should we suffer sacrifice and die for something which will not improve our material condition? We are fighting not for mere abstract freedom alone, but for material prosperity. We want Swaraj because foreign domination has sucked the blood of our nation. It has obstructed the national progress. We are fighting for a Swaraj which will carry us forward with the rest of mankind. We have been kept back

too long already; why should we go further backward into primitive savagery?

The Charkha will not help us. It is a step backward, not forward. Why should our women spin all day when a good piece of machine-made cloth can be bought more cheaply in the market? We don't want sixty crores of rupees to be taken from our country by the British merchants who sell us their cloth, but if we have to pay more for a piece of cloth made in India how can we buy country-made goods?

More factories must be built in the country so that everything the people need can be supplied by articles manufactured in India. This is the only way by which foreign goods can be thrown off our home market. But if thousands of factories are built in the country, who is going to prosper thereby? *Those people who own them.* This prosperity will not be for the workers who form the majority of the nation. If the mill-owners of Bombay grow richer, does that make our hunger less biting? Therefore we declare that ample provision should be made so that the Indian workers can share in the national prosperity that will come with political and economic independence.

This prosperity will be created by the workers. Factories will be built and operated by them, just as the existing ones are built and operated. The labour of the workers has enabled the factory-owners to make profits but have the workers gained anything except a bare existence? No. nothing. The fact that the factory was owned by a foreigner or an Indian has made no difference to the Indian working class. The capitalist proprietor is interested in making profits. He pays the workers the smallest possible wages, just sufficient to keep them alive and working. In the last four years, the profits from the cotton mills of Bombay and Ahmedabad have increased six to seven times, while the wages have hardly doubled.

We want all this to be changed. Swaraj must help India to build more industries, to build more factories, to employ more workers. But we are not fighting for a Swaraj that will

increase the means of exploiting the working class. The latter must derive some benefit if they are asked to fight for it. And it must not be forgotten that *there can be no Swaraj unless the Indian workers and peasants join in the struggle for it.* If Swaraj is to be won through the combined strength of the workers and peasants, they must be convinced that they are fighting for something which will benefit them, whose fruits they will reap and enjoy.

### **A Minimum Wages And on Eight-hour Day for Labour**

We demand that every worker shall receive a minimum wage which will secure for him and for his family a decent standard of living which will guarantee him an improvement in his present miserable condition. Out of the profits derived from the factories, houses should be built for the workers. If the National Congress desires to lead the masses in the struggle for liberation, it must endorse these demands of the working class.

The workers are human beings and are entitled to lead a human life. Why should they spend their whole time in working for the profit of the employer? They need time to enjoy themselves, to educate themselves, to develop the finer aspects of life, and to rest. This they can never do so long as they must spend ten, eleven, twelve and fourteen hours a day in mines, factories and workshops, earning a miserable pittance insufficient for themselves and their families to exist upon. We want the industrialization of the country because with the help of modern machinery, all requirements of society can be secured by the minimum amount of human labour and in the shortest possible time. But this will not mean the betterment of the condition of the working class, *so long as the means of production remain the property of private individuals, whose object is not to produce commodities for the use and benefit of the community but to produce them for exchange in order to make profit.* This is demonstrated by the condition of the working class in highly industrialized countries like England, Germany and France and the United States. Indus-

trialization is a curse so long as it is conducted on the basis of capitalist production for profit, of private ownership.

Eight hours a day for five and a half days a week should be the maximum amount of compulsory labour performed by anybody. In that space of time, a factory worker produces much more value than the amount he receives in wages for a ten or eleven hours day. Why are the Indian workers forced to work such long hours? Because the employers, both native and foreign, make more profit by exploiting him (them) thus. Eight hours labour in a modern factory produces more than sufficient value to pay for three full meals a day, clean clothes and a decent place to live in, besides leaving a good margin for profit. In few Western countries, where there is an eight-hour law, do the workers work longer ; yet their wages are higher and standard of living far superior to that of the Indian workers. This is not due to the fact that Western capitalists are any more charitable than our own, but *to the organized strength of the working class, which has been able to enforce a minimum wage and eight-hour day by means of direct action*. If the masses contribute their forces towards the winning of Swaraj, their demand for a fair standard of living must not be ignored. The national freedom that leaves the majority of the people in their present condition of wage-slavery will not mean anything to them and will prove a hollow mockery.

The Indian working class is becoming articulate after being dumb for centuries. It is developing a consciousness of its economic interests. It will fight for national liberation because such liberation will be more helpful to its economic progress, or not at all. The days of docile slavery are gone for ever. The Indian masses are learning self-assertion. Swaraj will cease to have any charm for them if it does not promise at least some modification of their present economic servitude. They will not build the nation only to become the servants of native masters. They will not fight to free the country only to return meekly to their chains after the establishment of Swaraj.



Our goal is not to secure political power and economic aggrandizement for the native landholders, financiers, merchants and manufacturers, but to put an end to the economic slavery of the masses of the population. So our programme of national liberation must include provisions for the economic emancipation of the working class.

(Our programme must be put into action at once. We must demonstrate by deeds that it is not the aggrandizement of the upper classes but the emancipation of the masses under Swaraj that we strive for. To rally the working class under the banner of Swaraj, we must make this economic struggle a part of the political struggle. The redress of the immediate grievances of the Indian workers and peasants should be our object. In case of conflict between the interests of the native capitalist and the worker, we must boldly take the side of the latter if we are sincerely fighting for the welfare of the majority of the Indian people. Such demands of the workers as the right of organization, the right of strike, the recognition of the unions, the eight hour day, minimum wage, proper housing facilities, etc. should be included in the Action Programme of the Indian National Congress, or failing this, a Party of the Masses would be organized setting forth the demands of the Indian workers and peasants. Every local strike should be developed into a general strike with combined political and economic demands at every available opportunity. Labour unions should be organized, not to reconcile the interests of the employers and the employees but to act *as militant organs of the working class struggle*.

### **Workers' Control of Industry**

In the industrial field we must go farther if our goal is the complete economic emancipation of the masses. Industrial development will release the working class from the drudgery of primitive production. Machinery enables man to procure his necessities with the least amount of labour. This process of saving human labour and releasing human effort for higher pursuits will continue with the development and application

of science. Every blessing conquered by the genius and efforts of men should be brought within the reach of our people. *But this cannot be done unless the present social system, the system of private property, is radically changed.* We advocate this change. Considering the industrial backwardness of our country, it may be necessary to advance gradually towards this goal. But in order to counteract the abuses and miseries of capitalist industrialism, we propose *state supervision and workers' control of industry.*

All heavy industries should be placed under the supervision of the National State based upon universal suffrage. But experience in the Western countries has shown that political democracy alone does not restrict the exploitation of the working class by capitalism. On the contrary, it protects the most flagrant and intensive forms. Therefore we demand that *Swaraj shall be based not only upon political, but upon industrial democracy as well.* Those who control the means of production monopolize the political state power. If the industries of the country are left entirely as the property of and under the control of the individual capitalist, political freedom even under a democratic government will be only a myth. The protection and welfare of the working class therefore demands a certain degree of supervision and restraint over capitalist ownership of industries. This supervision and restraint will be exercised by the *workers' council*, elected from among and by the workers in the factory. These councils will see that the laws regarding the protection of the workers are enforced and that the profit accruing to the owner does not exceed a certain limit set by the democratic government. In this way the national wealth, increased by the development of industries, will be as evenly distributed as is possible within the limits of capitalist ownership. Excessive exploitation of the workers will be prohibited and the industries of the country will be run no longer in the exclusive interests of a few individuals who contribute nothing themselves to the actual process of production, but whose pockets are swelled by

the unpaid labour of the workers. State Supervision and Workers' Control of Industry will enable the people in general to benefit at least in part by the process of modern machine production, and will hold somewhat in check the abuses of capitalistic exploitation.

Our ultimate object, however, is a complete *social revolution*, which means the *abolition of private ownership in the means of production, distribution and exchange*. Only thus will the real freedom of the Indian people be achieved. The realization of our goal depends upon the development of the working class.

The political independence of the nation must be followed by the economic emancipation of the masses, because without economic freedom the labouring classes, which constitute the overwhelming majority of every community, cannot attain an all-round elevation on every plane, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

### 3. Social Emancipation

The real and lasting freedom of a people demands their complete and unconditional social emancipation. From time immemorial, the working class has lived in a state of social slavery. Why is this so? Why is the class which produces everything condemned to slavery? Is it because it is by nature inferior to the other classes? Is there any reason to believe that those who maintain society by their toil are in any way inferior to those who live in idle luxury? No, we cannot believe that some have been specially ordained to live in comfort and happiness, while the great majority exist in want and misery. Two hundred workers build a house. In this house, a few people live comfortably. Who decides that these few, and not the many whose labour has built the house, shall live in it? *The law of private property decides*. The people who have paid for the house are said to *own* it, though they have done nothing to bring it into existence. They have not laid one brick; they have not moved a piece of stone; they

have not carried one pitcher of water. Yet we are told: "the owners have paid the workers wages for their labour." Where did the owners get this money with which they paid wages to the workers? They did not coin it, neither did it drop from heaven. This money with which the workers are paid their wages does not belong to the owners, because it has been gained by exploitation, by robbing other workers of the fruits of their labour. The money has been gained from profits made on land or industry or trade and all profits, as we have seen, are made from the unpaid labour of the working class. Thus the wealth of the rich does not rightfully belong to them, but to those who have worked to produce it.

*Just so long as everything that is produced by the labour of the many remains the property of the few, just so long will the working class continue to be the slave of the capitalist class, of those who own private property. Until this system based upon private ownership, which leads to the exploitation of human labour, is changed there cannot be real freedom. Since everything of value is created by human labour, these should belong to all those who work. And in order to earn the right to live in human society, productive labour should be made compulsory to all.*

Some argue thus: "Well, the people of the upper classes are more educated and more intelligent than the workers, that is why they are able to earn more money." This is a foolish argument. If the children of the workers and peasants were sent to the same schools and colleges as the children of the rich, would they be any less educated than the latter? Of course not. It is not lack of *ability*, but lack of *opportunity*, that creates a difference in education and culture. It is not natural inferiority but *economic disability* that creates such a wide gulf between the rich privileged classes and the poor and down-trodden masses. The wages they receive are not sufficient to feed their children; how then can they send them to school, especially in a country where education is neither free nor compulsory? No, it is not natural inferiority; they are maintained in poverty so that the few may live in luxury.

Against this system, we must rebel. We declare war on it, and we demand its overthrow. This is what we want. National freedom, a small increase in wages, some improvements in our miserable way of living will not, after all, change our life very much for the better. The cost of living will keep step with the increase in wages. As long as capitalism exists, so long as society is based upon private ownership, the working class will continue to be exploited by the possessing class. *We demand the liberation of the industrious classes. We are struggling for that state of society in which everyone shall work, and each will enjoy the full fruits of his labour.* We fight for national independence because we know that it is the first step forward towards our ultimate goal. What we really strive for, what we really want, is for the Indian nation to become a free community of those who labour productively for the good of society. In such a community the idle rich can have no place. It is the task of the workers to establish such a society. We propose to educate, organize and lead the working class in this struggle for Social Emancipation, which will be hard and prolonged. The goal cannot be reached at once, we must progress by stages. In order to free the toiling masses from social slavery, we have to fight every inch of the way. The privileged class is seated very firmly in the saddle. It cannot be overthrown at once, When the foreign ruler is driven out, our native master class will take its place. Age-long economic enslavement has obstructed our moral and intellectual progress. For this reason, in spite of the unbearable misery in which the majority of us live, many are still resigned to their lot. They believe fate has ordained them to be poor and to suffer. This ignorance and passivity of the masses has always been fomented by the upper classes and maintained by every means within their power, chief among which has been the preaching of religions that teach resignation to our earthly lot as to the will of God. The first thing we have to fight and overcome is this spirit of resignation and submission engendered by superstition and ignorance. This task is aided by objective economic forces, which have shaken the

traditional passivity of the Indian masses and have set them on the warpath. It is our task to direct this awakening in the channels that will lead to real freedom.

We must educate the ignorant workers. We must show them how they are robbed and exploited. Many do not know what slaves they are; they think it a virtue to be poor. We must teach them that those who preach the virtues of poverty are not true spiritual guides, but the protectors of the interests of the master class. The masses must be freed from their moral slavery in order to realize fully the misery of their material life. Throughout the ages they have been taught that they will be rewarded in the afterlife if they suffer patiently in this. This is all very well to say, but we know that the hope of future bliss does not lessen the sufferings of our everyday life, which is the only actuality we know of. No, we must fight to win freedom in this life, to improve our present economic condition in order to release other and higher faculties, born of leisure and enjoyment. We must teach the masses that the philosophy of poverty is conducive to the interests of the idle, because it keeps the people docile and harmless. This spirit of docility and resignation does not make for freedom: so long as the Indian people remain victims of this pernicious doctrine, even the political liberation of our country cannot be realized.

Therefore we want to organize the workers in their own class organizations with the object of fighting for the interests of their class. If they do not wish to be deceived and betrayed, let them not trust the leadership of the upper classes, whose interests are fundamentally opposed to their own. The exploited masses can be educated and organized effectively only in the school of revolutionary mass action.

### **Revolutionary Mass Action**

The working class must be organized first of all to defend its own interests. We have seen how the interests of the entire people in any country cannot be the same, because they are divided into two antagonistic classes, namely, the

propertied and the propertyless, the owner and the producer, the employer and the employee, the capitalist and the worker. The former thrives on the exploitation of the latter, therefore the interest of the one cannot be the interest of the other. Both may unite temporarily to fight together against a common enemy, but this union can never be permanent, because each is struggling for a different goal—neither is actuated by the same motives; *each wants liberty, but the liberty of their respective class.*

The Indian people as a whole are exploited by the foreign ruler, and therefore the British Government is their common enemy irrespective of class distinction. Rich and poor, capitalist and worker, bourgeoisie and proletariat, are fighting and must continue to fight in a united front against the foreign domination. This fight is called the struggle for national freedom. The Indian people are fighting for their political independence, for the right to rule themselves. The Indian propertied class want to be free of foreign rule because under it, freedom of development and the unrestricted right of exploitation is denied to this class. If all the wealth produced by the workers and peasants of India remained in the hands of the rich native capitalists the British would cease to rule India, because there would be no profit in their rule. As long as a foreign government rules the country, the native capitalist class must lose a portion of the proceeds of exploitation, which are appropriated by the foreign ruler and which the native consider their legitimate due. Such being the case, the native upper classes must fight the foreign exploiter. They say they are struggling against foreign domination to make the country free, but what they are really fighting for is their own interest. They are fighting for the freedom to exploit the Indian workers and peasants and the natural resources of the country; in order to secure this they must become the rulers of India. This is the national freedom they are striving for; this is what they want.

But is this what we want? Will the condition of the toiling

masses, who constitute the great majority of the Indian people, be any better off after gaining such national freedom? No, surely not. The Indian workers and peasants are poor, they are starving, they die by thousands from famine and pestilence, because the exploitation of the propertied class deprives them of the fruit of their labour. The British, being the rulers of the nation, are able to rob the people more than the native capitalists do. Therefore we must fight to overthrow them. But the overthrow of British rule will not be enough to free the entire people from economic exploitation and social slavery. *The fundamental motive of our struggle is to abolish the source of human exploitation, which lies in the system of private property, of production for profit, in a word, Capitalism.* Since the entire Indian people are exploited by a foreign power, the entire people must rebel against it, must unite their forces to fight against and overthrow it. But this does not alter the fact that the people are divided into two antagonistic classes, with mutually opposing interests.

The Indian workers and peasants will join the struggle against foreign rule, impelled by the interests of their class, because it exploits them, keeps them economically backward and obstructs their social progress. Our fight is of a different nature from that of the rich Zamindars, capitalists and intellectuals. We are fighting for the interests of the common people and our goal must be always clear before us. We want to end foreign exploitation of the Indian masses in order to better their economic condition. This is our immediate goal. Our ultimate goal is the end of all exploitation. We want to break the age-long social slavery of all those who live by labour, who create all wealth.

How to achieve this ultimate goal? How to proceed? A hard struggle lies before us. Our fight will be a long one. Intelligent leadership is necessary, but we must ultimately learn to depend on the irresistible strength of mass action, impelled ever forward by relentless economic forces, which in the end always triumph. *Our task is to develop in the minds of the masses this consciousness of their own power, to awaken their*



*interest and develop their indomitable will to conquer freedom. They will do the rest.*

By agitation, we can educate the workers to understand the interests of their class. We can teach them how to organize themselves for concerted action on the economic and political field. We can help to root out of them the spirit of resignation, of submission to fate, which robs them of all initiative and desire to improve their material existence by active struggle. We must teach them their right to live as human beings, and help them to formulate the demands which must be backed by determined mass action, which under perfect organization and leadership can be developed into a country-wide general strike.

Our task will be aided by external forces, ever at work. Starvation and age-long suffering have already shaken the traditional resignation of the Indian working class. They are in a rebellious mood, ready to fight. They demand a change in their condition but because of their centuries of moral and material slavery, the majority of them do not know exactly what to fight for. It is our task to infuse consciousness in these toiling masses —to develop the spontaneous awakening and intensify their rebellious spirit of leading their struggle for the redress of their immediate grievances. *Our object should be to create discontent everywhere against the present system of exploitation, and to intensify it wherever it exists.* Thus will the ideal of Swaraj be brought within the understanding of the workers and peasants of India. Let us lead them forward under the slogans: ‘*Down with Foreign Rule*’; ‘*Down with all Exploitation*’; ‘*Land to the Peasant and Bread to the Worker*’.

## *Appendix IV*

# **The Indian Struggle\***

**Subhas Chandra Bose**

### **The Anti-Climax (1922)**

It is not possible at this distant date to understand how profoundly the people of India believed in 1921 that Swaraj would be won before the end of that year. Even the most sophisticated people shared this optimism. I remember listening once to the speech of an able Bengalee advocate at a public meeting in 1921, in the course of which he asserted in all seriousness : 'We are surely going to get Swaraj before the year is out. If you ask me how we are going to win it, I cannot answer. But we are going to win it all the same.' On another occasion in 1921, I was discussing with an exceptionally able Calcutta politician some instructions issued by the Mahatma. He had declared that all funds at the disposal of the Congress should be spent before the end of the year and that nothing should be left over for the next. To a normal rational mind this seemed improper, but defending the Mahatma, this friend said, 'We have deliberately chosen not to look beyond December 31st'. All this may appear now as madness; nevertheless, it gives some idea of the exuberance of naive enthusiasm and optimism that had taken possession of the country that year.

With the dawn of the new year, 1922, a special effort was made by the Mahatma to whip up public enthusiasm. It was therefore decided to proceed to the last item in his plan—namely, non-payment of taxes. On February 1st,

\* Excerpts from : '*The Indian Struggle*' by Subhas Chandra Bose (on Chauri Chaura Incident)

1922, he sent an ultimatum to the Viceroy, Lord Reading, saying that if within seven days the Government did not demonstrate a change of heart, he would commence general non-payment of taxes in Bardoli subdivision in Gujerat (northern part of Bombay Presidency). It was reported that in Bardoli subdivision there were many people who had worked with Mahatma Gandhi in the passive-resistance movement in South Africa and had acquired experience in work of that kind. The beginning of the no-tax campaign in Bardoli would be the signal for starting a similar campaign all over the country. Elaborate arrangements were also made to start a no-tax campaign\* in Bengal simultaneously, and the United Provinces and Andhra (northern portion of Madras Presidency) were also well-prepared for a campaign of that sort. The ultimatum of the Mahatma threw the whole country into a fever of excitement. With bated breath everybody began to count the hours as they sped by. Suddenly there came a bolt from the blue which left the people speechless and dumbfounded. That was the incident at Chauri-Chaura.

On February 4th, at a place called Chauri-Chaura in the United Provinces, the villagers in a fit of exasperation set fire to the police-station and killed some policemen. When this news reached the Mahatma, he was horrified at the turn of events and immediately summoned a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli. At his instance, the Committee decided to suspend the civil disobedience movement (that is, the defiance of laws and governmental decrees, including non-payment of taxes) entirely throughout India for an indefinite period and all Congressmen were enjoined to confine themselves to peaceful constructive work. The 'constructive programme' included hand-spinning and hand-weaving, removal of untouchability, promotion of intercommunal unity, suppression of the drug traffic, extension of 'national' education, suppression of litigation and establishment of

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\* Non-payment of the Chowkidari tax, which all villagers then had to pay for the upkeep of the village police, etc.

arbitration-boards—without voluntarily violating any law or governmental ordinance existing at the time.

The Dictator's decree was obeyed at the time but there was a regular revolt in the Congress Camp. No one could understand why the Mahatma should have used the isolated incident at Chauri-Chaura for strangling the movement all over the country. Popular resentment was all the greater because the Mahatma had not cared to consult representatives from the different provinces and because the situation in the country as a whole was exceedingly favourable for the success of the civil-disobedience campaign. To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling-point was nothing short of a national calamity. The principal lieutenants of the Mahatma, Deshabandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were all in prison, shared the popular resentment. I was with the Deshabandhu at the time and I could see that he was beside himself with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly bungling. He was just beginning to forget the December blunder when the Bardoli retreat came as a staggering blow. Lala Lajpat Rai was experiencing the same feelings and it is reported that in sheer disgust he addressed a seventy-page letter to the Mahatma from prison.

## **The Communist Party of Great Britain and ourselves \***

**Muzaffar Ahmad**

Ours was a subject country of Great Britain, which made it easy for Englishmen to journey to and back from our country. This was the reason also behind the Communist International's directive to the Communist Parties of the metropolitan countries to help in building Communist Parties in their respective dependencies.

The Communist Party of Great Britain has rendered us considerable service. The British Communists tried to work among the Indian students and sailors although in the case of the sailors their labour was fruitless. We did not come across any sailor in the Calcutta port who, coming back to India, joined our Party or did any organizational work with us. The only exception was Abdul Haqim, a Calcutta sailor, who carried a letter for us; but his good intentions notwithstanding, there was a storm over this letter. He carried this letter safely up to Calcutta and stayed there on that occasion for quite a number of days. However, when he came to the office of the Workers' and Peasants' Party at 2/1 European Asylum Lane (which has now been renamed Abdul Halim Sarani after Abdul Halim, a pioneer member of the Communist Party of India) he completely forgot the directions given to him to hand over the letter to me. When in the course of his voyage again, he was going to write home from Aden, he found the letter lying undelivered in

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\* Excerpt from "*Myself and the Communist Party of India*" by Muzaffar Ahmad.

his writing-pad and posted it at Aden at once. A big envelope addressed to Muzaffar Ahmad at 2/1 European Asylum Lane, could not but fall in the hands of the police; and there was terrible commotion over this letter in the Central Legislative Assembly. The letter was Exhibit No. 377 submitted on behalf of the Government in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

I do not know whether any Indian sailor from Bombay and Karachi ports having association with the British Party joined the Party here. The well-known Amir Haider Khan and Shamsul Huda of Calcutta were, it is true, sailors; but they joined the Party in India as a result of their association with the Communist Party of America.

It was among the Indian students that the labour of the Communist Party of Great Britain was fruitful. In former times while mixing with the *kala admis* of India, the Englishmen, perhaps, did not lose their separate identities. But the British Communists did not suffer from such inhibition and mixed freely with the Indian students. They, therefore, attracted the Indian students easily. But none of the Indian students of 1920's who, in the course of their studies in any university in London or in any other English university, became Communists through their association with the British Party, joined the Communist movement or any mass movement after their return to India during that decade.

When Mr P. C. Nandy of Bengal, a Chartered Accountant returned to India in 1927-28, he delivered to me a verbal message from comrade Clemens Palme Dutt and a sum of £15, which the latter had collected in London for *Ganavani*. Through auditing the accounts of trade unions, he maintained a sort of distant contact with our Party, but he dropped even that very soon.

When, after becoming a barrister, Pulinbehari Dinda of Midnapore returned to India, he joined the Workers' and Peasants' Party in 1928. But after the arrests in connection with the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, he left not only the Party, he left even Calcutta. He spent the rest of his life in Midnapore. He is now dead.

While studying in Cambridge in 1920's, Prof Kshitish-prasad Chattopadhyaya used to maintain close contact with the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India and distribute its literature published from Germany among the Indians in England. He went to Berlin and even met M. N. Roy. His name finds special mention in the I.P.I. (Imperial Police Intelligence) reports. However, on returning home, instead of working with us he joined the Congress; but in the forties and in the fifties also he became involved deeply and with his entire family in working with us.

Jiwanlal Kapoor, the Lahore barrister, was one of those who became a Communist through association with the British Communist Party. He expressed his willingness to defend us in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case in the Sessions Court, but Qutbuddin Ahmed and Abdul Halim from Calcutta had already engaged Manilal Doctor. Among the Indian students who had come into contact with the British Party and returned to India in 1930's, many joined the Communist Party of India and are still working for it. I have already mentioned that Dr Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf came into our contact in the beginning of 1923 and his name has been mentioned in contemporary police records. He was in close contact with the Party in Britain. He returned to India in the thirties and became a wholetime worker for the Party. Sajjad Zahir, Dr Z. A. Ahmad and Hazra Begam also returned in the thirties and joined the Party. So did S. Mohan Kumarmangalam and his sister, Parvati Krishnan of Tamilnadu. Nikhilmath Chakravarty, Jyoti Basu, Indrajit Gupta and Renu Roy (Chakravarty) of Bengal became Communists through their association with the British Party. They returned in the beginning of the forties or a little earlier or a little later and joined the Communist Party of India. Bhupeshchandra Gupta also returned to India at that time and joined the Communist Party. His case is a little different. He was detained without trial for being a member of Surendramohan Ghose's terrorist revolutionary party. In the thirties along with other terrorist

revolutionaries he also started to study Marxism in the detention camp. It was as a detainee that he appeared in the B.A. Examination of the Calcutta University from the Behrampore detention camp and passed with distinction. His father, a wealthy man, wrote to the Government that he wanted to send his son to England for higher studies. The Government agreeing, Bhupesh Gupta went for studies to England, where he carried forward the study of Marxism-Leninism which he had begun in India. There were many others who joined the Party after returning from England in the forties. It is not possible for me to mention here the names of all of them. During the twenties, thirties and forties, many of the Indian students became staunch Communists in England but did nothing after coming back home.

Among those whose names I have mentioned above Dr Ashraf had died and only Jyoti Basu is a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). All the others have remained in the Right Communist Party.

The Communist Party of Great Britain has helped us in other ways also. Members of the Communist Party of Great Britain came to India to help us in our mission. They were, of course, sent by the Communist International. Since India was a subject country of Great Britain, it was much easier for Englishmen, at least for any British subject, to come to India and help us in our work. There was no law under which any citizen of Great Britain or any other British subject could be expelled from India. Percy Gladding, a member of the British Party, came to India in January, 1925, but he could not contact the real Communists. I was then in jail.

#### **GEORGE ALLISON**

A year more or less after Percy Gladding's return, George Allison came to India. He reached Bombay on April 30, 1926. He was a Scot by nationality, a coal-miner by profession, and a high-ranking and important member of the Communist



Party of Great Britain. I never heard him say what instructions he had received from the Red International of Labour Unions at the time of coming to India but from his programme of activities we got the impression that he would do trade-union work openly, while maintaining contact with the Party secretly. He was in Bombay from May to October and did not have to face any dangerous situation there. He passed these six months safely. None could suspect that he was a Communist.

George Allison came to India under an assumed name. It was not possible for him, a well-known member of the British Communist Party, to secure a visa for empire travel in his own name. So he came to India with a passport obtained under the code-name of Donald Campbell. Allison alias Campbell came to Calcutta in November, 1926, with a letter of introduction from Joglekar to me. I was then bed-ridden with illness. There was no mention anywhere in Joglekar's letter that its bearer was a member of the British Party. Perhaps, he did not know that. Joglekar wrote to me that the bearer of the letter was a British trade-union leader, who wanted to be introduced to some trade-union leaders in Calcutta. Allison, also spoke about meeting trade-union leaders when he called on me one morning at 37 Harrison Road. He said that he would call again in the evening. I told Allison that there was a trade-unionist living nearby and that I would ask him to come to my room at night. I got Shibnath Bandopadhyaya to come over to my place and Allison had a lot of discussion with him. Later, when both of them were taking leave of me, I told Shibnath, "Look here, I am ill. Please wait on the footpath and get him into a taxi or a hackney-carriage."

Shibnath Bandopadhyaya had recognised Allison. Getting down on the footpath, he asked Allison if he could recognise him, for they had met in such-and-such year on the Leningrad station in Moscow. Allison was instantly put in mind of the meeting, for only once in his life he had met an Indian on the Leningrad station in Moscow. Allison was

convinced that since Bandyopadhyaya had studied in the Communist University of Moscow and had been introduced to him by Muzaffar Ahmad, he could not be anything but a Communist. After this, Allison became very chummy with Bandyopadhyaya. Allison even gave the passport in Donald Campbell's name to him to keep with good care and in a secret place and the seed of a disaster was sown at once.

I was anxious for news about Allison but could hear nothing at all from him. I started wondering whether he was somebody important or perhaps one of those who came every year from Europe, especially from England, to study working-class conditions and movements. Then I went to Lahore that very November or in December. There I found that a letter had arrived from Muhammad Ali, Member, Foreign-Bureau of the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. He had written, among other things, that Donald Campbell was an important member of the British Communist Party and special care should be taken for his security. I got alarmed lest he should run into some danger in Calcutta, because Campbell had already got involved in a quarrel between two factions in the trade-unions in Calcutta. To put it in plainer language, drawn by Kishorilal Ghose's gift of the gab, he had turned towards Mrinalkanti Basu's group. I wrote to Abdul Halim in Calcutta, explaining everything. He met Campbell immediately, but he (Campbell) refused altogether to entertain Abdul Halim, whom he had met at 37 Harrison Road. If he had confided everything to Halim that day, disaster could have been averted.

On reaching Bombay from Lahore in January, 1927, I found that Donald Campbell also had arrived there from Calcutta. The visit of Shapurji Saklatvala was the occasion for our meeting in Bombay. Janakiprasad had accompanied me. Shamsuddin Hassan and Krishnaswami Ayengar had also arrived from Lahore and Madras respectively. For the first six months of his stay in Bombay, after his arrival in India, Donald Campbell had not aroused anybody's suspicion. The letter he sent by post from Calcutta to Joglekar

fell in the hands of the police in Bombay, and this prompted them to start investigations about him. When we reached Bombay, everything about Donald Campbell had been exposed. We were in Bombay surrounded by police informers, but none of us yet knew that Donald Campbell was, in fact, George Allison.

We took some decisions in Bombay : (1) The Workers' and Peasants' Party, instead of remaining confined only to Bengal, should be extended to other provinces; steps had been taken already to establish the Workers' and Peasants' Party in Bombay; (2) A Marathi Weekly named *Kranti* would be published in Bombay; The Bengali Weekly, *Ganavani*, having ceased publication, it was decided to revive it; (3) It was further decided that Donald Campbell would stay in Calcutta and the newly-arrived Philip Spratt would stay in Bombay.

According to arrangements made between Campbell and me, Campbell would return by the Calcutta Mail on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. As for myself, I would return by a different route, by the Calcutta Mail on the East Indian Railway. The latter being a somewhat longer route, it took me a longer time in the journey. The train also had started late from Bombay.

On reaching 37 Harrison Road in Calcutta, I came to know that the place had been searched. I got nervous about Donald Campbell, who had arrived a few hours earlier. He was staying at a boarding-house at Sudder Street. I sent Soumyendranath Tagore, who had by then reached 37 Harrison Road, to find out about Campbell. He returned to inform me that Campbell had been arrested. The passport that he had given Shibnath Bandopadhyaya to keep had led to his arrest. Shibnath Bandopadhyaya had entrusted the passport with Kalidas Bhattacharyya of Bhatpara. Bandopadhyaya and Bhattacharyya were Secretary and President respectively of the Bengal Jute Workers' Association. The police had received definite information. After entering Kalidas Bhattacharyya's room, they just put their

hands in a niche in the wall, found the passport there and left with it. Donald Campbell had just arrived at his Sudder Street boarding-house from the railway station when the police party went there and said, "Mr Campbell, we have got your passport. Please accompany us to Lalbazar." Lalbazar was the police headquarters. From Lalbazar Campbell was produced in the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court. But as Campbell had landed at Bombay, he was to be tried there. As the warrant from Bombay had not arrived, the Magistrate ordered him to be released on bail. But Campbell had instructed us that in case he was arrested, none of us should come forward to do such things as going bail for him; and in order to mislead the police, this business was to be done through the trade unionists with whom he mixed. But as the police had found out everything about him after his visit to Bombay that month, there was no question of misleading the police. Still we went from one trade-union leader to another but none agreed to go bail for him. We, therefore, had to go forward to bail him out. Soumyendranath Tagore stood bail for him.

There was a serious row in Bengal over the arrest of Donald Campbell. There were some who accused Shibnath Bandopadhyaya of getting Campbell arrested; otherwise how could the passport given to him to keep secretly be discovered in a niche in the wall of the house of Kalidas Bhattacharyya of Bhatpara! Shibnath said, "I really entrusted the passport with a reliable person, and cautioned him in everyway. Kalidas Bhattacharyya was a member of a terrorist revolutionary party and was detained without trial during World War I. He is still a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and moves with the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal. "I did nothing wrong." On being questioned, Kalidas Bhattacharyya said that he had kept the passport at his sister's place. On the previous day, when leaving for Gouripore in Assam, his sister had returned the passport to him. Before he could make any fresh arrangement, the police had found

it. The police had acted on definite information. They entered Kalidas Bhattacharyya's house, put their hands straightway into the niche in the wall, picked up the passport and left the room at once. A fantastic thing! Kalidas Bhattacharyya knew the importance of a passport. Why didn't he make any arrangement for keeping the passport in a new place! The Brahmins in Bhatpara had so many large buildings. He could have walked a few yards and left the document in one of them. It is extremely doubtful whether the police would have entered any of these buildings in January of the year 1927. It has never been cleared up who was responsible for this affair. But the police came on definite information and Kalidas Bhattacharyya was a very needy man. Donald Campbell was ultimately taken to Bombay, where he was tried for using a forged passport. The Civil Service Officer and certain other persons came from London to give evidence. It was proved that the passport in Donald Campbell's name had been forged and that Donald Campbell was in fact George Allison, an important member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for eighteen months. As a British subject, he could have stayed, if he wanted, in India at the end of his term. There was no law under which a British subject could be expelled from India. But the British Government in India in conspiracy with the Home Government put George Allison abroad an England-bound vessel even before the expiry of his term.

Allison had been incapacitated for mining work as a result of a mine accident. He had an inborn gift for leadership. He was a member of the Polit-Bureau of the British Party. He died in London in September, 1951.

#### **PHILIP SPRATT**

From the Communist Party of Great Britain following George Allison came Philip Spratt. Taking occasion of Saklatvala's visit to Bombay in January, 1927, George Allison also came

to Bombay. At that time he had long discussions with Philip Spratt for several days.

Spratt was then a young man aged only twenty-seven. He had graduated with Honours in Physics (Tripos) from Cambridge University and become a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Clemens Pälme Dutt sent him to India after instructing him properly. Spratt reached Bombay in December, 1926. Some writers have put the date as December 30, 1926. I met Philip Spratt for the first time on the evening of January 13, 1927, at the Bombay Y.M.C.A. C. Krishnaswami Ayengar had taken me to see him.

I have already said that George Allison got involved in a case for using a forged passport. Before long Philip Spratt also got involved in a case for sedition (124-A, I.P.C.). His co-accused were S. S. Mirajkar and another person. Spratt wrote a book entitled '*India and China*', which was published by Mirajkar and printed by another person. A case for sedition was instituted against all three of them. They were, however, released on bail.

Our Bombay comrades, who addressed Mrs Sarojini Naidu as mother, all of them together, pressed her to persuade Mr M. A. Jinnah to look after the case, but he declined the brief. However, he gave a valuable piece of advice to Mrs Naidu. His advice was that we should make an application and get the case transferred to the High Court Sessions, where Philip should give up the demand for trial by a European jury; and then the case would be tried by a majority of Indian jurors, who would naturally be sympathetic to an Englishman being tried for treason in India. The Bombay comrades acted according to Mr Jinnah's advice. The case was committed to the High Court Sessions and a jury, consisting of one European and eight Indians, was selected for the trial. At the end of the trial, the eight Indian jurors returned a verdict of not guilty. Only the European juror adjudged the accused guilty. Agreeing with the majority verdict, the Judge acquitted the accused. The '*India-China*' Case ended in this manner.

In September, 1927, Benjamin Francis Bradley (Ben Bradley), member of the British Communist Party, came to India. It was decided that as Ben Bradley would stay in Bombay, Philip Spratt should go to Calcutta. But Philip Spratt did not come to Calcutta immediately to stay there permanently. Describing himself as a German-American, a Soviet comrade came to Calcutta with a party of American tourists. He was called Mazut. I do not know what the real name of this comrade was, but he was called Mazut also in the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. He was a leader of the Young Communist International at that time. As long as the tourists were in Calcutta, Philip Spratt also had to stay with this comrades at the Continental Hotel. The period under reference was December, 1927. I also had to go to Continental Hotel one night to meet comrade Mazut. There are different Republics in the Soviet Union. However, Philip Spratt could not ascertain which place comrade Mazut belonged to. Mazut, in his opinion, was certainly not a Russian; he could be a Turk or even a Caucasian. Anyway, on that occasion, Philip Spratt, stayed with us for a few days at 2/1 European Asylum Lane. We went together to attend the session of the the Indian National Congress in Madras (in December, 1927). It was on the occasion that a manifesto of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, addressed to the Indian National Congress, was circulated for the first time. The previous year the Communist Party of India had circulated for the first time a manifesto in its own name addressed to the Congress Session at Gauhati. This manifesto was printed in London by the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. We got printed copies of the manifesto in packets by post in Calcutta. Comrade Abdul Halim arranged to distribute them in Gauhati.

From Madras Philip Spratt went to Bombay where throughout the month of January he wrote the articles printed in *A Call to Action*.

In the beginning of February, 1928, a committee meeting of our Communist Party was held in Bombay. The

articles printed in *A Call to Action* were discussed and adopted at the meeting. I also attended the meeting. It was at this time that the Simon Commission had landed at Bombay where a *hartal* was observed and many factory workers struck work. We led a workers' procession walking all the distance from Matunga to Foras Road. It was on this occasion also that the Workers' and Peasants' Party came out on the streets with red flags and festoons displaying hammer and sickle. In Bombay there was a massive meeting, at which, perhaps a mike was used for the first time.

I do not know where comrade Mazut's party of tourists went. They had come to Bombay in February, 1928. I met comrade Mazut a second time in a hotel in Bombay and had a long talk with him on that occasion. He questioned me also about M. N. Roy.

In March, 1928, Philip Spratt came to Calcutta and began to stay with us on a permanent basis at 2/1 European Asylum Lane (now Abdul Halim Sarani). This time he adapted his mode of living and food habits to ours, remaining half-European only in his clothes. We raised strong objections, but Spratt did not budge at all. He began to work also in the trade unions. It was not as easy to work in the trade unions in Calcutta as it was in Bombay. In those days, the factories in Bombay were situated within the city and one could travel everywhere by tram at a fare of four pice. But the industrial area of Calcutta sprawled on either bank of the Hoogly over a distance of 60/70 miles, if not more. A poor European could not survive on a diet on which a poor Indian could live. The standard of living of a poor European was much higher than that of a poor Indian. But Philip Spratt reduced his standard to ours.

Spratt did not flinch from the strenuous labour of organizing working-class movements in Bengal in 1928. He never deviated even slightly from Party discipline. He deviated only from his European standards. Possibly, this was why he could not go back to Europe.



Philip Spratt and ourselves, the other accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, were arrested and went together to Meerut Jail. He never did anything unbecoming in the jail. He never allowed his revolutionary prestige to suffer.

This is a book of my reminiscence of Party life. I am chronicling events here, recording them without any embellishment. I must acknowledge the magnitude of Philip Spratt's contribution to the Communist Party of India, but it is a matter of great pity that this *Philip Spratt is now a renegade*. It is not that he left the Party and became a sympathiser. He has become an open enemy of the Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism. Such things have happened many times in the world. Nonetheless, I feel sometimes that it would have perhaps been better if it had not happened in Philip Spratt's case. It is not that Spratt had got a high-salaried job for his renegacy. He has married an Indian and been living in hardship. His major mission today is to oppose the Communist Party in every way.

#### **BENJAMIN FRANCIS BRADLEY**

This is his full name. Ben Bradley is an affectionate abbreviation. Son of the working-class, he became a factory worker at fourteen and shortly afterwards began learning engineering jobs. He was sixteen when World War I began. In 1916 he joined the navy and was released two years and a half later. Appointed by the Government of India, he once came to India in 1921-22, and stayed for a period of nine months. He worked in an arms repairing factory in Rawalpindi. Afterwards he became a journeyman engineer. He was a member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineers.

India was not an entirely unfamiliar country to him, when he came to work with us here in 1927. Sharp working-class struggles were going on in 1927 and 1928, and it was in the midst of these struggles that Ben Bradley came. He became seriously involved in the struggles of the textile and the railway workers. Bombay was the centre of his activities. Unlike Philip Spratt, he did not lower his

standard of living, particularly his diet, hence his health never suffered.

Accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, he never displayed the slightest weakness. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for ten years. This sentence was reduced, on appeal, to one year by the High Court.

On March 20, 1929, the police went to arrest him like all the others, but as he was away from Bombay on railway-union work, he could not be arrested on that day. He was arrested two or three days later and was released in November, 1933. On his return to Europe he submitted a detailed report to the Communist International about the Communist Party of our country. It was Ben Bradley who under the name of Tambay represented the Communist Party of India in the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

Ben Bradley maintained contact with the Indian students in London. He would mention with a feeling of pride the fact that he had been to India, had conducted movements there and as a result had undergone imprisonment. He dreamt of going back anyhow to India once more. But the Communist Party of India failed in getting this dream of his translated into reality.

He corresponded with us regularly. He was suffering from high blood pressure and had to be hospitalised. At the time of going to hospital, he wrote me that he was going there as his pressure had gone up. I do not know why I did not reply at once. Had I done so, he would have received the reply. I cannot repent too much my failure to send him a prompt reply. This great friend and comrade-in-arms of ours died in January, 1957.

## India and Communism\*

**SOME EARLY COMMUNIST PRONOUNCEMENTS :** The history of Indian Communism reached back to the very early days of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, when the possibility of attacking England through her eastern possessions, particularly India, was already present to the minds of the Moscow leaders. In December 1918, the wireless stations of the Soviet Government broadcast a report of a memorandum handed to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet by an "Indian delegation", in the name of the "Peoples of India". The memorandum called upon the Soviet for assistance and ended with an expression of confidence that the days of England were numbered and that free Russia would stretch out a fraternal hand to oppressed Indians. Messages sent out a year later spoke of the facts that the Russian Communist Party had decided "to take concrete measures to spread revolution in the East" and that the Third International was about to establish sections in oriental countries. On the 9th February 1924, Moscow turned her eyes more directly on India, and speaking through Chicherin, proclaimed that, "Future India must stand at the head of the free Eastern Republics." These declarations, selected more or less at random, could be supplemented almost *ad infinitum* from the voluminous early writings of

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\* Excerpt from '*India and Communism*' (Compiled by the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department, Government of India, 1933. Revised upto 1935. Chapter 12, Pages 108-116).

prominent Communists in the *International Press Correspondence* and elsewhere. There is evidence also to show that they are no chance expressions of a vague intention, but rather the deliberate avowal of an abiding purpose—the calculated statement of a policy which is steadily and remorselessly being put into execution.

**MANABENDRA NATH ROY'S EARLY HISTORY :** It was in 1920 that Manabendra Nath Roy, the father of Indian Communism, made his first appearance in Russia. After a hurried departure from India in 1915, when, as Narendra Nath Bhattacharji, he absconded from bail in a case of terrorist dacoity. Roy made a protracted tour of the Far East and eventually found his way to America where he was indicted in the San Francisco conspiracy case. He again absconded and crossed the border into Mexico, whence he departed in 1920 for Europe and for Moscow, the scene of his greatest revolutionary achievements. Amongst other missions on which his masters in the Comintern dispatched him were one for Afghanistan during the *hijrat* movement in 1920 and another to China during the disturbances there in 1926-27. On each of these occasions the task allotted to him consisted of corrupting, by means of subversive propaganda, and otherwise, loyal Indians (Muslims in the former case and Sikhs in the latter) and assisting in the plots of those who were already disaffected. He was helped in this work by his wife, Evelyn, née Trent, an American lady whose views on Communism were similar to his own. Roy was also placed in charge of a propaganda school at Tashkent, and was compelled to seek refuge in France in 1923 after the anti-Bolshevik coup in Germany, where he was working at the time. He was expelled from France also early in 1925. Wherever he has gone Roy has left behind him a trail of anti-British conspiracy and intrigue and his capture and imprisonment in 1931 is an achievement which the police in India may well regard as important.

**ROY AS MOSCOW'S INDIAN ADVISER :** Arrived in Europe, Roy quickly placed himself at the head of a small but

extremely virile group of other malcontents, who, like himself, found the atmosphere of post-war Berlin and neo-revolutionary Moscow more congenial than that of their native India. The inevitable rivalries, of course, occurred even at this early stage in the proceedings, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya (Chattarji), who had appeared on the scene several years earlier being Roy's chief opponent. Roy overcame all opposition however, and succeeded in securing his own recognition by the Moscow leaders as the spokesman of "Indian nationalists". Ambitious, energetic and unscrupulous Roy managed to retain the confidence of the Soviet to an extraordinary degree and apparently succeeded in so magnifying his achievements that he was regarded as having gone a long way towards the promotion of Communism in India.

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNISM IN INDIA :** It was when the first of Roy's and Chattopadhyaya's following began to drift back to India, the finished products of Moscow's infant Oriental Academy, that Communism first came to India. In the vanguard were Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukharji, who returned to India, the one on Roy's behalf in 1921 and the other in 1923 as an agent of Chattopadhyaya. Both had been members of terrorist organisations in Bengal prior to their departure abroad and both were sent back as Communist emissaries to renew their old acquaintances and to seek from amongst them recruits to the new "ideology". But of these two, more anon; their history is too engrossing to be dealt with so summarily as the limits of this particular chapter would seem to demand. Slow to take root in a country where the feudal spirit and hereditary principles are so ingrained as in India, the Bolshevik movement grew no less surely on that account. By 1924 its menace to India's peace and prosperity had become sufficiently serious to necessitate the first important Communist conspiracy case (I exclude the Peshawar conspiracy case of 1923), and in February of that year a formal plaint was lodged at Cawnpore against a selection of eight (including the absent Roy) of

168 Indian Communists whose names the "brief" of the case contained, the charge being that of conspiring to deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereignty of British India.

**THE CAWNPORE CONSPIRACY CASE AND AFTER :** For various reasons only four were actually brought to trial and convicted but their removal hit the movement hard, for leaders (even of the calibre of Shaukat Usmani, Sripad Amrit Dange and Muzaffar Ahmad) were rare in those days. M. N. Roy was still at work abroad, having by this time found a place in the Executive Committee of the Communist International (I.K.K.I.), and it soon became clear that the setback was only temporary. In July 1924 (before all the stages of the case had actually been concluded) the Communist International decided to adopt Roy's suggestion that a new Indian Communist Party should be formed as a branch of the Communist International. Three months later, a correspondent to a Calcutta newspaper announced that "in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case it has been settled that to have faith in Communism in itself is no offence. Thus the fear of the law against Communism has been removed" while another newspaper announced the open formation of an Indian Communist Party with branches at Madras, Bombay, and Cawnpore, and added that "an all-India Communist conference will be held in three months' time". This, the first conference of its kind, was duly held in the last week of December 1925. So, too, in November 1924, Roy wrote of the Cawnpore case that it had had good effects as well as bad: "People have got used to hearing things which simply terrified them before..... We must reap the benefit of this situation...We must prepare to begin the struggle for the legalization of our party."

The events of the next few years were to make it very clear that Communism had come to stay and that nothing short of the collapse of the Soviet system itself would ever eradicate manifestations of sympathy for that system, at any rate in the urban areas of India. The most that the authorities could hope to do was to mitigate, by constant

watchfulness and by judicious and timely action both within the narrow limits of the law and in the broader economic field, the evils and dangers of the preaching of class hatred to those who are ill-adapted to receive such doctrines with thought and discrimination. This was the position at the time of the institution of the Meerut conspiracy case in 1920 and is roughly the position to-day.

### **The Period of Regeneration**

**AN ESTIMATE OF ROY'S EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS :** There can hardly be a better exposition of the present Communist policy of turning every subversive movement to its own account than the history of Indian Communism in the years 1924 to 1928, which is roughly the period covered by Sir David Petrie's book already referred to. In summarising the degree of progress achieved during that period, Sir David Petrie showed how utterly bankrupt M. N. Roy had been in the way of practical achievement, and went on to say: "It would be quite erroneous, however, to suppose that Roy's singularly barren record can be taken to mean that Communism has obtained no footing whatever in India. For instance, many recent articles in Indian-edited papers could be cited to show that the Press is becoming increasingly alive to the immense power of mass action as a political weapon. Communism, as expounded by Mr Saklatvala during his recent tour, earned appreciative comment in several quarters which could not all be dismissed as irresponsible. It is hardly to be supposed that such papers accept the doctrines of Communism with their ultimate implications (the reverse is almost certainly true), but it is indisputable that the mass action idea has come to stay, as also the impression that, as this particular weapon broke the domination of the Tsars in Russia, so it may again be used to win India her freedom from the overlordship of Great Britain. There are many clear evidences also of a growing recognition on the part of the Indian National Congress (and cognate political bodies) of the need of organising the

labouring masses in order to associate them with the general movement for the country's political advancement. Then there are the organisation of Workers' and Peasants' Parties and the growing intrusion into Labour movements of persons working for avowedly Communist purposes. The address of Bhupendra Nath Dutt to the Political Sufferers' Conference at Gauhati, no less than the association of individual revolutionaries with Communism, could be fittingly quoted to support M. N. Roy's contention that the 'tendency of "going to the masses"' is gaining ground among the nationalist intellectuals of advanced views'. The penetration by Communism of indigenous revolutionary movements—notably the Sikh—is also a feature the significance of which it would be dangerous to ignore. All these various manifestations must be regarded as so many symptoms that can be diagnosed in only one particular way.'

**DOUBTS OF ROY'S ABILITY:** To this appreciation, which was written in September 1927, it will be necessary to add a brief description of the events on which it was based and of one or two incidents which were just outside its scope, before proceeding to deal, in another chapter, with the more serious events of the year 1928 which must indubitably be classed as the dangers of which the above appreciation gave warning. It was during the period covered by Sir David Petrie's volume that the Communist International began to realize and correct its previous errors and to place less reliance on M. N. Roy's omniscience and infallibility where Indian affairs were concerned. From 1924 onwards new tactics became clearly discernible in Moscow's handling of the Indian situation. The Communist note in propaganda, where it was likely to offend the native populations was suppressed, and nationalism was exploited as an unconscious means of furthering Communist aims. It was at this time, too, that the indifferent quality of Roy's Indian agents, practically all of them greedy opportunistss lacking in scruples and principles and even in common honesty, began to attract attention at headquarters where



demands were made for a greater return for the vast sums of money expended. Although Roy's reply, to these demands was to lay impudent claim to such outbreaks as the Moplah rising and the *Aika* movement in the United Provinces as the work of his agents, he did not completely set at rest the doubts and questionings mentioned and Zinoviev demanded and obtained the adoption of a scheme "of direct contact between the Comintern and the proletarian organisations and parties of British India, ignoring the local Communist Party" (and presumably also M. N. Roy, the then directive agency).

**CHANGED TACTICS—EUROPEAN SUPERVISION :** The orientation of this new policy and the wane of Roy's monopoly of power caused the dispatch to India, in spite of Roy's vehement protests, of the first of a series of British Communist agents in the form of Percy E. Glading, *alias* R. Cochrane, of the National Minority Movement. It is true that Glading arrived in India armed with credentials from M. N. Roy, but the disparaging report on Communism in India which he rendered on his return makes it very clear that he was by no means an agent of Roy. He was followed by George Allison, *alias* Donald Campbell, a prominent member of the British Communist Party, who arrived in Bombay in April 1926. Allison had visited Moscow in 1924 and had remained there till July 1925, and was sent to India "to develop the left wing inside the Trades Union Congress" but "to keep out of party politics except in an advisory capacity if necessary". This latter he failed to do and the prominent part which he took in labour affairs in Bombay and Bengal eventually led to his discovery and apprehension in November 1926 and his subsequent prosecution and conviction on charges of using as genuine a forged document and of having counterfeited the seal and stamp of the London Foreign Office on his passport. He was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment in all and was deported on the expiry of his sentence. It is of some interest that he was again sentenced at the Winchester

Assizes in November 1931 to three years' penal servitude for attempting to provoke mutiny in His Majesty's Navy.

**SPRATT, BRADLEY AND HUTCHINSON :** Allison's place was taken by Philip Spratt, who arrived in India in December 1926 ostensibly on behalf of a firm of booksellers but in reality to open in India a Labour Publishing House through which Soviet money could be received and distributed. In actual fact, he took up the work which Allison had compulsorily abandoned, and, industrious and capable Communist that he was, gave the Indian group not only the benefit of his advice and experience, but, what was just as important, a not inconsiderable amount of financial assistance. Spratt was joined in September 1927 by Benjamin Francis Bradley, also a capable and devoted worker, who took a similarly active part in the organisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party and in work amongst the employees of the cotton mills and the railways. The last of this almost unbroken chain of foreign agents was a man of less forceful character, Hugh Lester Hutchinson, who came to Bombay in September 1928 after a short sojourn in Berlin where he came into close contact with Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya. Soon after his arrival in Bombay he became involved in the Communist movement there, but his weakness of character and his dalliance with Chattopadhyaya's sister, the communistically-minded Mrs Suhasini Nambiar, rendered largely innocuous any harm that his upbringing (his mother is to this day a rabid member of the Communist Party in Manchester) might have caused him to attempt to do.

**OTHER AGENTS FROM ABROAD :** Before leaving this subject, it would be as well to refer to two other Communist agents who visited India at the end of 1928 when the flood-tide of Communism was at its height. Each sought to help the furtherance of Moscow's aims but fortunately neither was allowed to remain in India long enough to do any great harm. The first was J. F. Ryan, an important member of the Communist Party of Australia and the then chairman

of the New South Wales Trade and Labour Councils. He arrived in India on the 18th November 1928 after attending a meeting of the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat in Shanghai. His mission was to attend the annual session of the All-India Trades-Union Congress at Jharia on the 22nd December 1928, in order to secure the affiliation of that body to the Pan-Pacific Trades-Union Secretariat and thus link up the fight against imperialism in India with that in the Far East. This he failed to do, though his speech at the Congress created a very favourable impression. The other was J. W. Johnstone, an American emissary of Chattopadhyaya's newly-formed Berlin organisation, the League Against Imperialism, who was sent on a similar mission on the League's behalf. He had freely associated with Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmad and other well-known Indian Communists and had delivered several most objectionable speeches before he was arrested and deported, with his mission only partly fulfilled. The brief appearance of these two minor actors on the Indian political stage would not have been worth mentioning were it not for the impression which they gave of the interest caused beyond the seas by the dawn of Indian Communism. There can be no doubt that this impression, coupled with numerous expressions of sympathy, some verbal and some in the more solid form of monetary assistance, raised the Indian Communists in their own estimation and provided a source of inspiration for further and greater efforts. The meaning of the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" was made clearer to Indian labourers.

**INDIAN LEADERSHIP :** Meanwhile, the four original conspirators had been released from the Cawnpore jail, three at least of them (Muzaffar Ahmad, Dange and Shaikat-Usmani) to resume old friendships, to revive old associations, and to take up the threads where the Cawnpore case had broken them. Meanwhile, too, Moscow's Eastern academies had not been idle and their output was producing in India a new generation of Communist leaders, each with his following, some more, some less, but none inconsiderable.

## *Appendix VII*

# **Communist University for the Toilers of the East**

### **A. COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY FOR THE TOILERS OF THE EAST\***

After the Third World Congress, it was decided to abolish the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International, and to open an Eastern Section of the headquarters in Moscow to take over the charge of promoting and guiding the revolutionary movement in the colonial world. The attempt to establish contact with the revolutionary movement in the Asiatic countries from the base in Central Asia having proved not very fruitful, it was decided that in future the Communist Parties in the imperialist countries should be directed to make similar attempts in the colonies of the respective Powers. In this respect, their activities would be guided by the Eastern Section of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and the latter, in its turn, would be assisted by representatives of the Communist Parties in the imperialist countries. Under the new arrangement, the African and South American countries, in addition to Asia, would come within the radius of the activities of the Communist International. South America was regarded as a semi-colonial region, because of the American domination of the New World.

The decision was that I should return to Moscow and take charge of the Eastern Section of the Communist International, so as to maintain the continuity of the initial work done from Central Asia. But I had already planned to go to

\* Taken from the Memoirs of M. N. Roy, 1964 publication, pages 525-532

Western Europe after the Central Asiatic base for developing a revolutionary movement in India was wound up. For that reason, I declined to take over charge of the Eastern Section at the headquarters of the Communist International, and recommended Safarov for the post. But before any final decision could be made, Safarov must be consulted, and it must be ascertained whether the Russian Communist Party was willing to release him from his responsibilities in Central Asia. In any case, I was to go there to wind up the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International, to disband the Indian Military School and to settle the future of the Indian revolutionary emigrants there. I was not much concerned about the majority of the latter. But my effort of one year had resulted in the conversion of a minority of the fanatical *Mujahirs* into a small cadre of conscious revolutionaries. Most of them were powerfully attracted by Communism and were keenly desirous of receiving further training in the theory and practice of revolution. Thinking about the problem of their future, I conceived the idea of establishing in Moscow a centre for the political training of revolutionaries from various Asiatic countries.

Lenin enthusiastically approved of the idea and advised me to consult Stalin about its execution. The latter was the recognised authority in the Russian Communist Party on questions of the communist approach to the problem of national minorities and subject nationalities. But Stalin was dangerously ill, the hardships of the Civil War having brought him nearly to death's door. It would be at least months before he could be disturbed for any serious discussion of political and organisational problems.

In the earlier years of the Revolution, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs served as an instrument of revolutionary propaganda in foreign countries. It had an agency in Tashkent, which co-operated with the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International. As it was virtually a part of the Central Asiatic base of revolutionary propaganda in the surrounding countries, the Tashkent Office of the Commissariat of

Foreign Affairs also had to be closed down. Therefore, Lenin advised me to discuss with Chicherin the future plan of activity. After the receipt of the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon's Note about the Indian Military School at Tashkent, Chicherin recommended that the base of revolutionary propaganda in the East should be shifted to a more convenient place. He enthusiastically approved of the idea of opening in Moscow a centre for training young men from the Asiatic countries for revolutionary work in their respective countries. He also thought that my plan of establishing contact with India from Western Europe was likely to be more effective. Because of the unfriendly attitude of the Afghan Government, nothing much could be done from Central Asia.

In the middle of 1921, the news of the non-co-operation movement in India had reached Moscow. The Russian Communists were enthused by the news, believing that India was in the throes of a revolution. The non-co-operation movement was interpreted as a revolutionary mass upheaval. Though of a sober and doubting disposition, Chicherin shared the enthusiastic belief about the imminence of a revolution in India. Referring to my discussion with Lenin about the revolutionary possibilities of the non-co-operation movement, and particularly Gandhi's role, he remarked that I was very pessimistic. Having listened to the arguments in support of my view, he suggested that I should write a comprehensive report about the situation in India for the information and guidance of the Russian Communist Party. The report should include an analysis of the social background of the non-co-operation movement. I agreed to write the report, but pleaded that it could not be done before I returned from Turkestan. For the moment, I briefly outlined the structure of contemporary Indian society and the class composition of the non-co-operation movement, in order to back up my point of view that the non-co-operation movement was politically immature, with little revolutionary potentialities. Chicherin requested me to prepare a

synopsis of the report, pending the preparation of that comprehensive document, which eventually took the form of my book, *India in Transition*.

At Tashkent, it was easy to wind up the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International. But the disbandment of the India House was a difficult problem. What to do with the inmates? I took the politically trained and intelligently revolutionary minority into confidence and communicated to them the idea of a Communist University in Moscow. They welcomed the idea very enthusiastically and were eager to go to Moscow. But I was not willing to take any except a chosen few all the way to Moscow. Going over the list of the students in the Tashkent Military School, I came to the conclusion that not more than twenty-five could be admitted to the proposed Communist University.

After a few days, in a general meeting of all the Indian emigrants, I announced the decision to close down the Military School, and enquired what they wanted to do. In the course of time, the fanatical enthusiasm to proceed to Turkey to fight for the defence of the Khilafat had cooled down. The perspective of the Indian centre in Tashkent being broken up in the near future seemed to cause a great deal of anxiety to those concerned. But few volunteered to return to India to participate in the anti-British movement there. What would they do when the India House was disbanded in the near future? Some of them would settle down in Turkestan and take to some small trade to earn their livelihood. Others would try their luck in Persia or Afghanistan, if they were given some monetary help. The more adventurous few would take the risk of reaching the North-Western frontier of India through the no-man's land of Eastern Bokhara.

Accordingly, a fair amount of money was given to each, and different groups of the non-political majority left on their way back, respectively chosen by themselves. It was a sad experience. But nothing better could be done. Nearly a hundred emigrants could not be indefinitely kept with no

purpose. According to reports received subsequently, the emigrants returning home did not fare very badly on the way. But I never knew whether they actually reached home, and what they did there. But from my nearly one year's experience with them, I was fully convinced that nothing else could be done with them. Therefore, to let them return as they desired and wherever they wanted, was the only thing to do under the circumstances.

Of those who remained behind, twenty-two were chosen to go to Moscow and join the Communist University there. Three wanted to join the Red Army. They were allowed to do so. The minority who were chosen for further political training were happy to be relieved of the company of the rest. They were thrilled by the idea of going to Moscow, and resolved to make the best of the unexpected chance.

A year and a half ago, I had left Moscow with great expectations. The experience in Central Asia was very valuable. But from there I could do nothing about India. Yet I was not disappointed, because I got the opportunity of serving the cause of revolution directly. The contact with a cross-section of the Indian masses at the same time dispelled some of my earlier illusions and gave me a realistic view of the latter. I was convinced that the Indian revolution was still a long way off, and an uphill path lay ahead. Arms and money would not make the revolution. The army of revolution should be first trained politically. Having travelled around the world since I left India in 1915, I had reached very near her frontiers with plenty of arms and money. It was in quest of those that I had left India. But when I was in a position to get plenty of them, I discovered that it was useless to search for arms before there were people ready to bear them. I was sure that if the resources I had at my disposal in Central Asia could be taken to the Indian frontiers they would most probably be seized by the enemy or misused by mercenary adventurers or otherwise lost. So I closed an exciting chapter of my life with the experience of a failure, but without regret. Now I must



discover other ways to my goal and to help the Indian Revolution.

Before leaving Turkestan on my way back to Moscow, I made the acquaintance of a young man who was closely associated with me during the whole of my stay in Russia. One day he approached me in front of the Tashkent Office of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, with the enquiry if I needed an interpreter. I was pleasantly surprised, because I did need one. The American who had originally come to Tashkent as my Secretary-Interpreter accompanied me to Moscow when I went there for the Third World Congress and had refused to return. As my second visit to Tashkent was to be short, I did not look for a substitute. The young man who approached me was remarkable in more than one way. I felt that he would be a valuable help in many things. I asked him to accompany me so that we could talk the matter over.

He was a young man, indeed much younger than he looked, of short stature, with black longish hair and a pointed beard. With a prominent nose and dark complexion, he was evidently a Jew. Introducing himself, he said that his family lived in Baku. There he was born. From the very beginning he actively participated in the Revolution, but would not join the Communist Party, because by conviction he was a mystic anarchist. Nor could he join the Party even if he wanted, because of his bourgeois parentage; he was born in a rich Jewish family. Nevertheless, he took part in the Civil War, which was very fierce in Baku and the neighbourhood. Restlessness and a spirit of adventure drove him from place to place, until he reached Tashkent as a journalist. On my enquiry why he came towards Central Asia instead of proceeding towards Moscow, he said that his dream was to go to India and help the revolution there. Having heard that an army to liberate India was being raised in Tashkent, he had come there to join it. Since he could not go to India immediately, he would be very happy to work with me if I found him to be suitable.

He spoke English fluently and in the course of time I discovered that he spoke also German and French equally well. He had never been abroad and had learned the foreign languages while he was in school. His family name was Levit. To hide his identity and his Jewish parentage, he called himself Tivel. In a few days I was impressed by his intelligence, earnestness and efficiency and appointed him as my Secretary-Interpreter. But would he accompany me to Moscow? He would gladly, as there was no chance for him to proceed to India and he did not want to stay on in Turkestan.

Tivel's willingness to act as my Secretary-Interpreter and to go to Moscow in that capacity solved a problem for me. How to take the twenty-two Indians selected for admission into the Communist University to Moscow? I did not like the idea of personally leading the caravan; nor could they be left to travel the long distance all by themselves. Railway travel was still very hazardous. It was quite possible that travellers would be stranded somewhere on the way. Tivel readily agreed to take over the responsibility of herding the flock to Moscow. He would be delighted to be associated intimately with the Indian comrades.

In consultation with Safarov and other Russian leaders in Tashkent, it was decided that, having disbanded the Military School and sent off the majority of the Indian emigrants on their way back home or wherever they liked, I should go to Moscow to look after the preparations for the opening of the Communist University. On hearing from me, Tivel would follow with the Indian students. The plan of sending so many Indians back with some financial help for the journey was kept a secret. It was quite conceivable that they would be arrested either in Afghanistan or in Persia by the British Military Police as Bolshevik agents going to make trouble in India. The plan was to send them off secretly in small batches and instruct the Russian Frontier Guards to put them across with the maximum degree of secrecy. Once they were on the other side of the Russian border, they had to depend

on their own wits. In any case, we did not feel in any way responsible for whatever might happen to them. They refused persistently to be trained as intelligent revolutionary propagandists according to our advice, and chose to go their own way. As a matter of fact, they were quite satisfied with the monetary help given to them. It seemed they did not expect even that much.

The winding up of the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International and the disbandment of the Indian Military School, however, were announced at a public function held under the auspices of the Turkestan Government. As both the events were likely to have adverse repercussions in the neighbouring countries, they had to be explained. In the public function, Safarov spoke to explain the closing of the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International : It did not mean that the Comintern had ceased to be interested in the struggle of the Asiatic peoples for liberation; the Turkestan Bureau was closed because experience had proved that its function could not be performed effectively from there. The Sections of the Communist International in the imperialist countries must play an active role in colonial peoples' struggle for liberation. The Communist International would more effectively implement its programme of helping the liberation of the oppressed peoples by urging its national sections in the imperialist countries to do their duty. For this consideration, the function allotted to the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist International would be taken over henceforth directly by the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The result of this change would only increase the activities of the Communist International in helping the development of the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries.

I had to speak to explain the disbandment of the Indian Military School. It was an emergency measure. By accident, a fairly large number of Indians had reached the territory of the Soviet Republic. The latter had naturally to offer them hospitality. As they all claimed to be revolutionaries, it was felt that the hospitality should help the promotion of their

purpose. The Communists believed that, to be beneficial, a revolution must have a social purpose. Accordingly, we wanted to make the Indian emigrants conscious of their revolutionary purpose. But they insisted on learning the use of arms. They had to be satisfied, so that they might not lose faith in the sincerity of the professions of the Soviet Republic. The emergency arrangement, however, served the purpose of helping a fairly large number of students in the Military School to understand the purpose of a revolution and the responsibility of a revolutionary. The work initiated in Tashkent would henceforth be done more elaborately, on a larger scale, in the Communist University for the Toilers of the East, to be founded in Moscow in the near future. The Indian comrades who had taken the fullest advantage of the hospitality of the Turkestan Republic would now proceed to Moscow to learn the lessons of the Russian Revolution, so that they could return home as soon as possible to resume political activities there, which would bear greater fruit.

### **B. COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY OF THE TOILING EAST\***

The other name of the University was the Stalin University.

‘‘As the Commissar of Nationalities and recognised authority on the problems of revolution in the Eastern Countries, Stalin was to be something like the Chancellor of the projected University, which was actually named after him’’ (M. N. Roy's *Memoirs* p. 536.)

Lenin was both alive and active in April, 1921. It is to be noted that it was during this time Stalin's name was also attached to the Communist University of the Toiling East. It is to be particularly noted that Stalin was yet to be elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I am recalling these facts because, after Khrushchov's sudden accession to power, there started a fierce storm of propaganda against Stalin. A leader or two

\* Excerpts from : Muzaffar Ahmad's *Memoirs* : ‘‘*Myself and the Communist Party of India*’’, Pages 71-83

of the Communist Party of India lost their heads in consequence and exclaimed, "Well, now we see that Lenin did not trust Stalin at all." But the history of the Soviet Union during the period under reference bears the firm impress of Stalin, and many documents reveal that Lenin took no decision on Eastern Affairs without consulting Stalin. That the Communist University of the Toiling East was named after Stalin is an evidence of this.

It is not only students from the Eastern republics of the present Soviet Union, who have learned the rudiments of Communism in the Communist University of the Toiling East, students from many countries outside the Soviet Union have also had their lessons in Communism there. Many of the present leaders of the Chinese Communist Party had their training in this University. I am unable to write down their names here correctly. I have read in an article, written by M. N. Roy in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, that Ho Chi-Minh, President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, was a student of this University.

After their return to Peshawar, the Indian students of the University said that the name of the Principal was Barida. But it is difficult to say whether Barida was the Principal or the Director of the University. We have found mention of the post of the Director but no mention of the post of a Principal anywhere.

An article entitled *Russia's University of Oriental Communism*, written by A. C. Freeman, appeared in the *Soviet Russia Pictorial* of April, 1923. The magazine was the monthly organ of the Friends of Soviet Russia Committee and was published from 201, West Thirteenth Street, New York. Freeman writes:

#### COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY OF THE TOILING EAST

This inscription is written in huge letters above the entrance to a large white building near the Pushkin Monument in

Moscow. And people with all sorts of picturesque costumes were going in and out of the building. There were Turcomans in high black wool hats, Sarts from Bokhara with bright embroidered caps, almond-eyed Tartars from the Volga and the Crimea, Moslem mountaineers from the Caucasus, political refugees from India, China, Japan and Korea.

The University is not, as one might imagine from its name, primarily an institution for spreading revolutionary unrest throughout Asia. This certainly is one side of its work. Students from such foreign countries as China, Japan, India, Persia and Turkey, are accepted upon the recommendation of the Third International. They are undoubtedly expected to go back to their native countries and work for the triumph of Communist idea.

But these foreign students represent only a very small part of the University's enrolment. Most of the Oriental young men and young women whom one finds studying in the crowded class-rooms of the institution, and living in the various houses which have been taken over as dormitories, come from the eastern and southern provinces of the vast federation of Soviet Republics. And the chief purpose of the Soviet Government in maintaining the University is not to turn out professional revolutionaries, but rather to train the future political and economic leaders of the more primitive sections of the Republic. Most of the students come from Muhammadan countries, but there is no attempt to cultivative Pan-Islamism or any other religious or nationalist sentiment among them, for Russia herself would be the chief sufferer if a wave of racial or religious fanaticism should unite the innumerable Moslem tribes who are scattered over wide stretches both of Europe and of Asia. The strictly international character of the instruction given in the University was emphasized by one of its leading directors.

"We regard any display of nationalist feeling as the most fatal disqualification for our students," he said. "Of course we teach the students who come from countries

outside the frontiers of Soviet Russia that they must fight against imperialism, whether the imperialism comes from within or from without. But this fight must be carried on in the name of international communism and the right of every people to self-determination, not through appeals to racial and religious prejudice and fanaticism."

I asked the Director how the courses of study were planned and arranged.

"We have to be very flexible in fixing our requirements for entrance and graduation," he replied. "I doubt if any other university in the world can show such wide variations in the mental background and previous training of its students. We often get Muhammadan peasants from some village in the Caucasus or the Crimea, who have not even the most rudimentary ideas about science and literature. And side by side with these we have political refugees from China and India and Japan who hold degrees from Oxford and Heidelberg. We have a large number of courses adapted to the most varied mental preparation. To the bulk of our students, who come from the more primitive and backward parts of European and Asiatic Russia, we try to give a good general training in history, science and literature, along with courses in the fundamental principles of Marxian Socialism. We have instructors who can speak all the various native dialects; and then the students usually learn Russian very rapidly."

"What is the chief purpose of the University?" I asked.

"To spread the ideals of Soviet Russia among the people of the East," replied the Director. "This purpose finds expression in two ways. We are not imperialist. We do not believe in taking up the white man's burden, in Kipling's sense of the phrase. And so we do not attempt to train Russians for the purpose of governing the Oriental peoples who live within the frontiers of the Republic. We believe that these peoples should govern themselves, and so we encourage their young men to come to this University, where they are able to get both practical and theoretical education and to make themselves fit to become leaders in

their communities. The regions from which we recruit most of our students, the Crimea and the Caucasus, Turkestan, Bokhara, and the Tartar Republic on the Volga, have always been comparatively backward culturally; and even a few educated men can act as a very beneficial progressive leaven.

“Not being imperialists ourselves, we naturally do not believe in imperialism for other countries. The Oriental students who come to the University from foreign countries are taught to combat reaction, whether it takes the form of foreign tyranny or domestic conservatism.”

I was allowed to inspect the whole University, visiting both the classrooms and the buildings which are used as dormitories by the students. There was the same contrast between ardent intellectual ambition and scanty material equipment that one finds so often in present-day Russia. The classrooms were bare and over-crowded ; the apparatus used in the physics and chemistry courses was pitifully meagre. But the students, among whom almost every country in Asia was represented seemed bright and eager to learn and quite undaunted by the cramped accommodations with which they were compelled to put up. One of the most striking things about the University was the number of women among the students, who had apparently discarded their eastern habits of thought along with their veils.

What will be the result of turning loose thousands of students, schooled in Western science and Marxian political and economic theory, among primitive races whose simple patriarchal life is dominated chiefly by the precepts of the Koran? It is difficult to predict; but there are all sorts of interesting possibilities in the experiment. Unless all signs fail, the graduates of the Communist University of the Toiling East are likely to play a very important part in the future political life of Asiatic Russia, of the Caucasus, and of the neighbouring countries of the Near and Middle East. (*Soviet Russia Pictorial* : New York 1923.)

I have reproduced A. C. Freeman's article here so that



everybody can form an idea about the Communist University of the Toiling East. We do not know much about Freeman except that he was an American. It appears that he was connected with the Friends of Soviet Russia Committee's movement. But it is difficult to find out whether he was a member of the Communist Party or not; very probably, he was not.

### **Roy's Wrong Statement Corrected**

Before concluding this history of the formation of the Communist Party of India abroad, I want to make one point clear here, even though it may not have much relevance. I have done it also previously ; I want to do it once again.' On p. 464 of his *memoirs*, Roy writes that Abdur Rab and Acharya came from Kabul to Tashkent. On p. 465 he writes that Shafiq accompanied them from Kabul to Tashkent. This account is incorrect. Abdur Rab and Acharya went back to Kabul from Russia and from Kabul they went to Tashkent long before the commencement of the Second Congress of the Communist International. It was from Tashkent that Prativadi Acharya and Shafiq went to Moscow to attend the Second Congress. M. N. Roy has himself written that a good number of days after the Congress had ended, he and his party left for Tashkent by a special train. Acharya and Shafiq travelled by the same train to Tashkent.

### **Inside India**

I have started my book with a very brief account of the events of my life that took place during the first two decades of the twentieth century. I have also tried to say a few things also about the contemporary political situation. I have also said many things touching on subjects like the foundation of the Communist Party of India abroad, its affiliation with the Communist International, etc. I shall have to write further on the subject later. Now I will try to describe what happened inside India.

### **The Evening Daily—*Navayug***

I have already said that at very beginning of 1920 I decided to make politics rather than literature, the pursuit of my life. When the 49th Bengali Regiment was disbanded in 1920, Qazi Nazrul Islam came, by previous arrangement, to stay with me in Calcutta. He was a Quarter-Master Havildar in the army. It was agreed that Nazrul Islam would pursue politics in addition to poetry and literature. He was then only twenty-one or twenty-two years old. Within a few months of his arrival in Calcutta, Nazrul Islam made his mark as a poet. Nazrul and I along with three or four others brought out an evening daily *Navayug*. The paper consisted of a single sheet—26 inches by 20 inches in size. The first issue of the paper came out on July 12, 1920. The real proprietor of the paper was Mr A. K. Fazlul Huq, a vakil (now called advocate) of the Calcutta High Court. We were free to write whatever we wanted. Inflammatory articles about the masses, especially workers, appeared in the paper. The paper was in circulation for a few months only. After *Navayug* had stopped, we (i.e., Qutbuddin Ahmad, Nazrul Islam and I) embarked upon a new venture. We decided to start a joint-stock company and have it registered in order to finance a paper, but the project failed.\*

### **First Efforts to Build**

#### **The Communist Party Inside India**

At various times, both earlier and later, attempts to build the Communist Party began at four places in India. These attempts were not the outcome of any decision taken after discussions at a joint meeting of those who first ventured upon this task; they started independently of each other and at different places: one even did not know the other. India is a vast country. The first four of these places—Calcutta,

\*I have written about this in detail in my *Qazi Nazrul Islam : Reminiscences* (published by National Book Agency (Private) Ltd., Calcutta-12). I am not, therefore, going over the same ground again.

Bombay, Lahore and Madras— are separated from one another by a distance of more than a thousand miles. Far apart from one another as we were, we ventured upon the task of building an all-India Party. We were able to do so because Communism is an international movement. For all of us, the epicentre was the Communist International; its headquarters lay thousands of miles away, in Moscow. However, the Communist International established independent connections with each of these four places. In some cases the Communist International introduced us to one another (as, for instance, it did Dange to me).

Among us, the pioneers, some started on the job in 1921, for instance, Shaukat Usmani, a member of the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India. Some started early in 1922. In 1924, Lt-Col. C. Kaye, Director of the Intelligence Bureau under the Home Department of India, who as complainant on behalf of the Government of India filed the case against the accused in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, stated in his petition that the accused Sripat (spelt Sripat instead of Sripad in the petition) Amrit Dange, Mowla Bakhsh *alias* Shaukat Usmani, and Muzaffar Ahmad were involved with the Communist International in a conspiracy to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of India. It is, therefore, quite clear that the offence with which the court charged the accused persons in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case and for which they were convicted had begun as long back as in 1921 ; their real offence was to establish connections with the Communist International.

### **Beginnings of the Party in Bengal**

My experiences are directly connected with Bengal; I shall, therefore, start my narrative with Bengal. I cannot say that the workers' strike and other movements going on in Bengal at the time left me wholly unaffected. Further, in course of editing *Navayug* I became interested to some extent in the problems of workers. I was in the habit of moving among the sailors in Calcutta, though not exactly for the purpose of

carrying on agitation among them. In those days the people of Sandvip, my birth-place, served on ships in large numbers and my real purpose in going about among the sailors was to come in touch with my countrymen. In the process I became interested in the problems of sailors. I wrote a lot about the demands of the sailors in *Navayug*.

### **I Purchase Marxist Literature For The First Time**

These circumstances prompted in me a desire to study a little about labour movement in general. About this time our friend, Makhanlal Gangopadhyaya, in course of a conversation with me one day at the office of Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Samiti, told me that Chakravarty, Chatterjee and Company Limited of College Square had received from England some books on labour problem. It was through Pabitra Gangopadhyaya that I had become acquainted with Makhanlal Gangopadhyaya. He wrote excellent English and Bengali and had studied a lot about literature. He became a very close friend of ours. He used to visit Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Samiti and also assumed many responsibilities for the Samiti later. To come back to the main story, when Makhan Gangopadhyaya told me about the imported books, I procured ten rupees after much effort. It was difficult for me in those days to collect a sum of ten rupees. With this sum of money I went one day to the shop of Chakravarty, Chatterjee and Company Limited. I was in *dhoti* and shirt that day. When I enquired about books on labour problem, the men at the counter gave a start and asked, "Where are you coming from?" I realized at once that they were feeling nervous about the imported books and had taken me for a police agent. I replied promptly, "I have been sent by Mr Mohammad Mozammel Huq. He is a friend of mine." The expression on their faces changed immediately, and they took me cordially to their godown on the first floor of a building on Shyamacharan De Street. And thereby hangs a tale.

The Albert Hall building with its numerous bookshops, the coffee-house, etc., which we see today, is a new construction. The management of the Albert Institute had the former

dilapidated building demolished and the present one constructed in its place. When the old building was demolished, many were rendered homeless. Chakravarty, Chatterjee and Company Limited was one of them: their problem was where to go. When this shop had been registered as a joint stock company, my friend, Mr Mozammel Huq, had bought a number of its shares. This was how he came to know the proprietors of the shop. It was because of him that Chakravarty, Chatterjee and Co. was rescued out of its homeless state. Mr Tafazzul Ahmad an engineer in the Public Works Department, was in charge of the buildings of the Presidency College, Hare School, the Sanskrit College and the Hindu School, etc. He and Mozammel Huq were disciples of the same *pir*, (Mohammedan saint). Using this connection, Mr Mozammel Huq approached Tafaz-zul Ahmad, the engineer, and pressed him earnestly, "Brother, you must see to it that Chakravarty, Chatterjee and Company gets a site for a shop in the outhouse of the Sanskrit College." These outhouses usually remained vacant. Mr Ahmad agreed and had an excellent shop built at the junction of College Square (Bankim Chatterji Street) and College Street—with doors on either side. Some alterations also had to be made here and there. This was why Mohammad Mozammel Huq enjoyed great prestige with Chakravarty, Chatterjee and Co. Mr Tafazzul Ahmad was the elder brother of the famous eye-surgeon, Dr T. Ahmad.

I am talking of November, 1921. Books were cheap in those days. I bought a number of books for ten rupees. Among the books were (1) a booklet of an article by Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* (2) Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder*; (3) *People's Marx* : Abridged Popular edition of *Capital*, Edited by Julian Borchardt, Translated in English by Stephen L. Trask, pp. vii 284, printed 1921. In the introduction to the last-named book, the editor wrote that he had studied Marx for thirty years to produce this abridged edition. There were a number of other books also, but I cannot recollect their names. One was a catechism on Karl Marx with Marx's photo on the cover. There

was another book, hostile to Marxism, written by some *padre*. There was not a single primer among the books I had purchased. If I could get *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* by Philips Price at that time, I could have learnt something at least about party organization. I came by this book in the latter half of 1922.

The Khilafat movement and—its spiritual off-shoot—the Non-cooperation movement, shook the country, but I did not participate in any of them. What I mean is that I did not go to prison by violating the orders under Sec. 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code of India or by doing anything else. Nazrul, of course, joined processions connected with this movement in Comilla and composed numerous songs on it. For the whole of 1921 we did not also make any political criticism of the movement or write anything against it. On the other hand, we severely criticised any act of repression launched against the participants. In 1920 the security deposit of *Navayug* was forfeited for the sharp language it had used in attacking the police firing upon the participants in the *Hijrat*. In 1920 I was nominated a member of the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee, but I did not accept the office. But I used to attend the joint meetings of the Khilafat-Non-cooperation movement, even the meetings which were held at night. These nightly meetings were held for the working people, who were engaged in work at various places during the day.

The last few months of 1921 were passing in this way. I have already written about purchasing Marxist books. But I did not know what I was going to do with them. I had not read any Marxist literature previously. We were still staying at 3/4-C Taltalla Lane. Nazrul Islam composed his famous poem *Bidrohee* in this house. It was about this time we were introduced in a surprising manner to a certain person. The introduction was brought about by one who was not a very desirable sort of company. We realized much later that the man to whom we had been introduced was himself also an undersirable character.

### **My Acquaintance with Abdul Hafiz Shareefabadi**

When I was working in Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Samiti, I became acquainted with Abdul Hafiz Shareefabadi. He hailed from the district of Burdwan. When I first became acquainted with him, he told me that he was a student of the Calcutta Training (Normal) School. In those days teachers of Bengali language were given training in the Normal School. I found out later that Abdul Hafiz was not at that time or ever had been a student of the Normal School. He was a house-agent in Calcutta and usually went about in khaddar pyjamas, sherwani and cap. A certain Haran Chandra from the district of Bakerganj also was associated with him in this business.

### **C. THE POLITICAL TASKS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST \***

Comrades, permit me, first of all, to greet you on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the existence of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Needless to say, I wish your University every success on the difficult road of training communist cadres for the East.

And now let us pass to the matter in hand.

Analysing the composition of the student body of the University of the Toilers of the East, one cannot help noting a certain duality in it. This University unites representatives of not less than fifty nations and national groups of the East. All the students at this University are sons of the East. But that definition does not give any clear or complete picture. The fact is that there are two main groups among the students at the University, representing two sets of totally different conditions of development. The first group consists of people who have come here from the *Soviet East*, from countries where the rule of the bourgeoisie no longer exists, where imperialist oppression has

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\* Speech delivered by J. V. Stalin at a Meeting of Students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East May 18, 1925

been overthrown, and where the workers are in power. The second group of students consists of people who have come here from *colonial* and *dependent countries*, from countries where capitalism still reigns, where imperialist oppression is still in full force, and where independence has still to be won by driving out the imperialists.

Thus, we have two Easts, living different lives, and developing under different conditions.

Needless to say, this duality in the composition of the student body cannot but leave its impress upon the work of the University of the Toilers of the East. That explains the fact that this University stands with one foot on Soviet soil and the other on the soil of the colonies and dependent countries.

Hence the two lines of the University's activity : one line having the aim of creating cadres capable of serving the needs of the Soviet republics of the East, and the other line having the aim of creating cadres capable of serving the revolutionary requirements of the toiling masses in the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

Hence, also, the two kinds of tasks that face the University of the Toilers of the East.

Let us examine these tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East separately.

### **The Tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Soviet Republics of the East**

What are the characteristic features of the life and development of these countries, of these republics, which distinguish them from the colonial and dependent countries?

Firstly, these republics are free from imperialist oppression.

Secondly, they are developing and becoming consolidated as nations not under the aegis of the bourgeois order, but under the aegis of Soviet power. That is a fact unprecedented in history, but it is a fact for all that.



Thirdly, inasmuch as they are industrially underdeveloped, they can in their development rely wholly and entirely on the support of the industrial proletariat of the Soviet Union.

Fourthly, being free from colonial oppression, enjoying the protection of the proletarian dictatorship, and being members of the Soviet Union, these republics can and must be drawn into the work of building socialism in our country.

The main task is to make it easier to draw the workers and peasants of these republics into the work of building socialism in our country, to create and develop the prerequisites, applicable in the specific conditions of life in these republics, that can promote and hasten this process.

Hence, the immediate tasks that face the leading cadres in the Soviet East are :

1) To create industrial centres in the Soviet republics of the East to serve as bases for rallying the peasants around the working class. You know that this work has already begun and it will advance together with the economic growth of the Soviet Union. The fact that these republics possess all kinds of raw materials is a guarantee that in time this work will be completed.

2) To raise the level of agriculture, above all irrigation. You know that this work has also been pushed forward, at any rate in Transcaucasia and in Turkestan.

3) To start and further promote the organisation of co-operatives for the broad masses of the peasants and handicraftsmen as the surest way of drawing the Soviet republics in the East into the general system of Soviet economic construction.

4) To bring the Soviets closer to the masses, to make them national in composition, and in this way implant national-Soviet statehood, close to and comprehensible to the toiling masses.

5) To develop national culture, to set up a wide network of courses and schools for both general education and vocational-technical training, to be conducted in the native

*languages for the purpose of training Soviet, Party, technical and business cadres from the local people.*

It is precisely the fulfilment of these tasks that will facilitate the work of building socialism in the Soviet republics of the East.

There is talk about model republics in the Soviet East. But what is a model republic? A model republic is one which carries out all these tasks honestly and conscientiously, thereby attracting the workers and peasants of the neighbouring colonial and dependent countries to the liberation movement.

I have spoken above about bringing the Soviets closer to the toiling masses of the different nationalities—about making the Soviets national in character. But what does that mean, and how does it manifest itself in practice? I think that the national delimitation recently completed in Turkestan can serve as a model of the way the Soviets should be brought closer to the masses. The bourgeois press regards this delimitation as “Bolshévik cunning.” It is obvious, however, that this was a manifestation not of “cunning”, but of the deep-rooted aspiration of the masses of the people of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to have their own organs of power, close to and comprehensible to them. In the pre-revolutionary epoch, both these countries were torn to pieces and distributed among various Khanates and states, thus providing a convenient field for the exploiting machinations of “the powers that be.” The time has now come when it has become possible for these scattered pieces to be reunited in independent states, so that the toiling masses of Uzbekistan and of Turkmenistan may be brought closer to the organs of power and linked solidly with them. The delimitation of Turkestan is, above all, the *reunion* of the scattered parts of these countries in independent states. That these states later expressed the wish to join the Soviet Union as equal members of it merely shows that the Bolsheviks have found the key to the deep-rooted aspirations of the masses of the people of the East, and that the Soviet Union is a voluntary

union of the toiling masses of different nationalities, the only one in the world. To reunite Poland, the bourgeoisie needed a whole series of wars. To reunite Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, however, the Communists needed only a few months of explanatory propaganda.

That is the way to bring the organs of government, in this case the Soviets, closer to the broad masses of the toilers of different nationalities.

That is the proof that the Bolshevik national policy is the only correct policy.

I spoke, further, about raising the level of national culture in the Soviet republics of the East. But what is national culture? How is it to be reconciled with proletarian culture? Did not Lenin say, already before the war, that there are two cultures—bourgeois and socialist; that the slogan of national culture is a reactionary slogan of the bourgeoisie, who try to poison the minds of the working people with the venom of nationalism? How is the building of national culture, the development of schools and courses in the native languages, and the training of cadres from the local people, to be reconciled with the building of socialism, with the building of proletarian culture? Is there not an irreconcilable contradiction here? Of course not! We are building proletarian culture. That is absolutely true. But it is also true that proletarian culture, which is socialist in content, assumes different forms and modes of expression among the different peoples who are drawn into the building of socialism, depending upon differences in language, manner of life, and so forth. Proletarian in content, national in form—such is the universal culture towards which socialism is proceeding. Proletarian culture does not abolish national culture, it gives it content. On the other hand, national culture does not abolish proletarian culture, it gives it form. The slogan of national culture was a bourgeois slogan as long as the bourgeoisie was in power and the consolidation of nations proceeded under the aegis of the bourgeois order. The slogan of national culture became a

proletarian slogan when the proletariat came to power, and when the consolidation of nations began to proceed under the aegis of Soviet power. Whoever fails to understand the fundamental difference between these two situations will never understand either Leninism or the essence of the national question.

Some people (Kautsky, for instance) talk of the creation of a single universal language and the dying away of all other languages in the period of socialism. I have little faith in this theory of a single, all-embracing language. Experience, at any rate, speaks against rather than for such a theory. Until now what has happened has been that the socialist revolution has not diminished but rather increased the number of languages; for, by stirring up the lowest sections of humanity and pushing them on to the political arena, it awakens to new life a number of hitherto unknown or little-known nationalities. Who could have imagined that the old, tsarist Russia consisted of not less than fifty nations and national groups? The October Revolution, however, by breaking the old chains and bringing a number of forgotten peoples and nationalities on to the scene, gave them new life and a new development. Today, India is spoken of as a single whole. But there can scarcely be any doubt that, in the event of a revolutionary upheaval in India, scores of hitherto unknown nationalities, having their own separate languages and separate cultures, will appear on the scene. And as regards implanting proletarian culture among the various nationalities, there can scarcely be any doubt that this will proceed in forms corresponding to the languages and manner of life of these nationalities.

Not long ago I received a letter from some Buryat comrades asking me to explain serious and difficult questions concerning the relations between universal culture and national culture. Here it is:

“We earnestly request you to explain the following, for us, very serious and difficult questions. The ultimate aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a single universal culture.

How is one to conceive the transition to a single universal culture through the national cultures which are developing within the limits of our individual autonomous republics? How is the assimilation of the specific features of the individual national cultures (language, etc.) to take place?"

I think that what has just been said might serve as an answer to the anxious questions put by these Buryat comrades.

The Buryat comrades raise the question of the assimilation of the individual nationalities in the course of building a universal proletarian culture. Undoubtedly, some nationalities may, and perhaps certainly will, undergo a process of assimilation. Such processes have taken place before. The point is, however, that the process of assimilation of some nationalities does not exclude, but presupposes the opposite process of the strengthening and further development of quite a number of existing and developing nations; for the partial process of assimilation of individual nationalities is the result of the general process of development of nations. It is precisely for this reason that the possible assimilation of some individual nationalities does not weaken, but confirms the entirely correct thesis that proletarian universal culture does not exclude, but presupposes and fosters the national culture of the peoples, just as the national culture of the people does not annul, but supplements and enriches universal proletarian culture.

Such, in general, are the immediate tasks that face the leading cadres of the Soviet republics of the East.

Such are the character and content of these tasks.

Advantage must be taken of the period that has begun of intense economic construction and of new concessions to the peasantry to promote the fulfilment of these tasks, and thereby to make it easier to draw the Soviet republics in the East, which are mainly peasant countries, into the work of building socialism in the Soviet Union.

It is said that the Party's new policy towards the peasantry, in making a number of new concessions (land on short lease,

permission to employ hired labour), contains certain elements of retreat. Is that true? Yes, it is. But those are elements of retreat that we permit *alongside* the retention of an overwhelming superiority of forces on the side of the Party and the Soviet power. Stable currency, developing industry, developing transport, a credit system which is growing stronger, and by means of which it is possible, through preferential credits, to ruin or to raise to a higher level any stratum of the population without causing the slightest upheaval—all these are reserves at the command of the proletarian dictatorship by means of which certain elements of retreat on one sector of the front can only facilitate the preparation of an offensive along the whole front. Precisely for this reason, the few new concessions that the Party has made to the peasantry should, at the present time, make it easier rather than more difficult to draw the peasantry into the work of building socialism.

What can this circumstance mean for the Soviet republics in the East? It can only mean that it places in the hands of the leading cadres in these republics a new weapon enabling these countries to be more easily and quickly linked with the general system of Soviet economic development.

Such is the connection between the Party's policy in the countryside and the immediate national tasks confronting the leading cadres in the Soviet East.

In this connection, the task of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the Soviet republics of the East is to train cadres for these republics along lines that will ensure the fulfilment of the immediate tasks I have enumerated above.

The University of the Peoples of the East must not isolate itself from life. It is not, nor can it be, an institution standing above life. It must be connected with actual life through every fibre of its being. Consequently, it cannot ignore the immediate tasks confronting the Soviet republics in the East. That is why the task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to take the immediate tasks that face these republics into account in training the appropriate cadres for them.

In this connection, it is necessary to bear in mind the existence of two deviations in the practice of the leading cadres in the Soviet East, deviations which must be combated within the precincts of this University if it is to train real cadres and real revolutionaries for the Soviet East.

The first deviation lies in simplification, a simplification of the tasks of which I have spoken above, an attempt mechanically to transplant models of economic construction which are quite comprehensible and applicable in the centre of the Soviet Union, but which are totally unsuited to the conditions of development in the so-called border regions. The comrades who are guilty of this deviation fail to understand two things. They fail to understand that conditions in the centre and in the "border regions" are not alike and are far from being identical. Furthermore, they fail to understand that the Soviet republics themselves in the East are not alike, that some of them, Georgia and Armenia, for example, are at a higher stage of national formation, whereas others, Chechnya and Kabarda, for example, are at a lower stage of national formation, and others again, Kirghizia, for example, occupy a middle position between these two extremes. These comrades fail to understand that if the work is not adapted to local conditions, if all the various specific features of each country are not carefully taken into account, nothing of importance can be built. The result of this deviation is that they become divorced from the masses and degenerate into Left phrasemongers. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to train cadres in the spirit of uncompromising struggle against this simplification.

The second deviation, on the other hand, lies in the exaggeration of local specific features, forgetfulness of the common and main thing that links the Soviet republics of the East with the industrial areas of the Soviet Union, the hushing up of socialist tasks, adaptation to the tasks of a narrow and restricted nationalism. The comrades who are guilty of this deviation care little about the internal

development of their countries and prefer to leave the development to the natural course of things. For them, the main thing is not internal development, but "external" policy, the expansion of the frontiers of their republics, litigation with surrounding republics, the desire to snatch an extra piece of territory from their neighbours and thus to get into the good graces of the bourgeois nationalists in their respective countries. The result of this deviation is that they become divorced from socialism and degenerate into ordinary bourgeois nationalists. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to train cadres in the spirit of uncompromising struggle against this concealed nationalism.

Such are the tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the Soviet republics of the East.

### **The Tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Colonial and Dependent Countries of the East**

Let us pass to the second question, the question of the tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in relation to the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

What are the characteristic features of the life and development of these countries, which distinguish them from the Soviet republics of the East?

Firstly, these countries are living and developing under the oppression of imperialism.

Secondly, the existence of a double oppression, internal oppression (by the native bourgeoisie) and external oppression (by the foreign imperialist bourgeoisie), is intensifying and deepening the revolutionary crisis in these countries.

Thirdly, in some of these countries, India for example, capitalism is growing at a rapid rate, giving rise to and moulding a more or less numerous class of local proletarians.

Fourthly, with the growth of the revolutionary movement, the national bourgeoisie in such countries is splitting up into two parts, revolutionary part (the petty bourgeoisie) and a compromising part (the big bourgeoisie), of which the first



is continuing the revolutionary struggle, whereas the second is entering into a bloc with imperialism.

Fifthly, parallel with the imperialist bloc, another bloc is taking shape in such countries, a bloc between the workers and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, an anti-imperialist bloc, the aim of which is complete liberation from imperialism.

Sixthly, the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in such countries, and of freeing the masses of the people from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie, is becoming more and more urgent.

Seventhly, this circumstance makes it much easier to link the national-liberation movement in such countries with the proletarian movement in the advanced countries of the West.

From this at least three conclusions follow :

1) The liberation of the colonial and dependent countries from imperialism cannot be achieved without a victorious revolution : you will not get independence gratis.

2) The revolution cannot be advanced and the complete independence of the capitalistically developed colonies and dependent countries cannot be won unless the compromising national bourgeoisie is isolated, unless the petty-bourgeois revolutionary masses are freed from the influence of that bourgeoisie, unless the policy of the hegemony of the proletariat is put into effect, unless the advanced elements of the working class are organised in an independent Communist Party.

3) Lasting victory cannot be achieved in the colonial and dependent countries without a real link between the liberation movement in those countries and the proletarian movement in the advanced countries of the West.

The main task of the Communists in the colonial and dependent countries is to base their revolutionary activities upon these conclusions.

What are the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries in view of these circumstances?

The distinctive feature of the colonies and dependent countries at the present time is that there no longer exists a single and all-embracing colonial East. Formerly the colonial East was pictured as a homogeneous whole. Today, that picture no longer corresponds to the truth. We have now at least three categories of colonial and dependent countries. Firstly, countries like Morocco, which have little or no proletariat, and are industrially quite undeveloped. Secondly, countries like China and Egypt, which are under-developed industrially, and have a relatively small proletariat. Thirdly, countries like India, which are capitalistically more or less developed and have a more or less numerous national proletariat.

Clearly, all these countries cannot possibly be put on a par with one another.

In countries like Morocco, where the national bourgeoisie has, as yet no grounds for splitting up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, the task of the communist elements is to take all measures to create a united national front against imperialism. In such countries, the communist elements can be grouped in a single party only in the course of the struggle against imperialism, particularly after a victorious revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

In countries like Egypt and China, where the national bourgeoisie has already split up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but where the compromising section of the bourgeoisie is not yet able to join up with imperialism, the Communists can no longer set themselves the aim of forming a united national front against imperialism. In such countries the Communists must pass from the policy of a united national front to the policy of a revolutionary bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie. In such countries that bloc can assume the form of a single party, a workers' and peasants' party, provided, however, that this distinctive party *actually* represents a bloc of two forces—the Communist Party and the party of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie. The tasks of this bloc are to expose the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the national bourgeoisie and to wage a deter-

mined struggle against imperialism. Such a dual party is necessary and expedient, provided it does not bind the Communist Party hand and foot, provided it does not restrict the freedom of the Communist Party to conduct agitation and propaganda work, provided it does not hinder the rallying of the proletarians around the Communist Party, and provided it facilitates the actual leadership of the revolutionary movement by the Communist Party. Such a dual party is unnecessary and inexpedient if it does not conform to all these conditions, for it can only lead to the communist elements becoming dissolved in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, to the Communist Party losing the proletarian army.

The situation is somewhat different in countries like India. The fundamental and new feature of the conditions of life of colonies like India is not only that the national bourgeoisie has split up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but primarily that the compromising section of this bourgeoisie has already managed, in the main, to strike a deal with imperialism. Fearing revolution more than it fears imperialism, and concerned more about its money-bags than about the interests of its own country, this section of the bourgeoisie, the richest and most influential section, is going over entirely to the camp of the irreconcilable enemies of the revolution, it is forming a bloc with imperialism against the workers and peasants of its own country. The victory of the revolution cannot be achieved unless this bloc is smashed. But in order to smash this bloc, fire must be concentrated on the compromising national bourgeoisie, its treachery exposed, the toiling masses freed from its influence, and the conditions necessary for the hegemony of the proletariat systematically prepared. In other words, in colonies like India it is a matter of preparing the proletariat for the role of leader of the liberation movement, step by step dislodging the bourgeoisie and its mouthpieces from this honourable post. The task is to create a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc and to ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc. This bloc can assume, although it need not always necessarily do so, the form of a single workers' and peasants'

party, formally bound by a single platform. In such countries, the independence of the Communist Party must be the chief slogan of the advanced communist elements, for the hegemony of the proletariat can be prepared and brought about only by the Communist Party. But the Communist Party can and must enter into an open bloc with the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie in order, after isolating the compromising national bourgeoisie, to lead the vast masses of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism.

Hence, the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the capitalistically developed colonies and dependent countries are :

1) To win the best elements of the working class to the side of communism and to create independent Communist Parties.

2) To form a national-revolutionary bloc of the workers, peasants and revolutionary intelligentsia against the bloc of the compromising national bourgeoisie and imperialism.

3) To ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in that bloc.

4) To fight to free the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie.

5) To ensure that the liberation movement is linked with the proletarian movement in the advanced countries.

Such are the three groups of immediate tasks confronting the leading cadres in the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

These tasks assume a particularly important character and particularly great significance when examined in the light of the present international situation. The characteristic feature of the present international situation is that the revolutionary movement has entered a period of temporary lull. But what is a lull, what does it mean at the present time? It can only mean an intensification of the pressure on the workers of the West, on the colonies of the East, and primarily on the Soviet Union as the standard-bearer of the revolutionary movement in all countries. There can

scarcely be any doubt that preparation for this pressure on the Soviet Union has already begun in the ranks of the imperialists. The campaign of slander launched in connection with the insurrection in Estonia, the infamous incitement against the Soviet Union in connection with the explosion in Sofia, and the general crusade that the bourgeois press is conducting against our country, all mark the preparatory stage of an offensive. It is the artillery preparation of public opinion intended to accustom the general public to attacks against the Soviet Union and to create the moral prerequisites for intervention. What will be the outcome of this campaign of lies and slander, whether the imperialists will risk undertaking a serious offensive, remains to be seen; but there can scarcely be any doubt that those attacks bode no good for the colonies. Therefore, the question of preparing a counter-blow by the united forces of the revolution to the blow likely to be delivered by imperialism is an inevitable question of the day.

That is why the unswerving fulfilment of the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries acquires particular importance at the present time.

What is the mission of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the colonial and dependent countries in view of all these circumstances? Its mission is to take into account all the specific features of the revolutionary development of these countries and to train the cadres coming from them in a way that will ensure the fulfilment of the various immediate tasks I have enumerated.

In the University of the Peoples of the East there are about ten different groups of students who have come here from colonial and dependent countries. We all know that these comrades are thirsting for light and knowledge. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to make them into real revolutionaries, armed with the theory of Leninism, equipped with practical experience of Leninism, and capable of carrying out the immediate tasks of the liberation movement

in the colonies and dependent countries with all their heart and soul.

In this connection it is necessary to bear in mind two deviations in the practice of the leading cadres in the colonial East, two deviations which must be combated if real revolutionary cadres are to be trained.

The first deviation lies in an under-estimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the liberation movement and in an over-estimation of the idea of a united, all-embracing national front in the colonies and dependent countries, irrespective of the state and degree of development of those countries. That is a deviation to the Right, and it is fraught with the danger of the revolutionary movement being debased and of the voices of the communist elements becoming drowned in the general chorus of the bourgeois nationalists. It is the direct duty of the University of the Peoples of the East to wage a determined struggle against that deviation.

The second deviation lies in an over-estimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the liberation movement and in an under-estimation of the role of an alliance between the working class and the revolutionary bourgeoisie against imperialism. It seems to me that the Communists in Java, who not long ago mistakenly put forward the slogan of Soviet power for their country, are suffering from this deviation. That is a deviation to the Left, and it is fraught with the danger of the Communist Party becoming divorced from the masses and converted into a sect. A determined struggle against that deviation is an essential condition for the training of real revolutionary cadres for the colonies and dependent countries of the East.

Such, in general, are the political tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the peoples of the Soviet East and of the colonial East.

Let us hope that the University of the Peoples of the East will succeed in carrying out these tasks with honour.

(Taken from the Collected Works of J. V. Stalin, Volume No. 7, pages 135-154)

## **Programme of the Communist International\***

**Adopted at the Sixth Congress in 1928**

### **Introduction**

The epoch of imperialism is the epoch of moribund capitalism. The world war of 1914-1918 and the general crisis of capitalism to which it led, being the direct result of the sharp contradictions between the growth of productive forces of world economy and the national State barriers which intersect it, have shown and proved that the material pre-requisites for socialism have already ripened in the womb of capitalist society, that the shell of capitalism has become an intolerable hindrance to the further development of mankind and that history has brought to the forefront the task of the revolutionary overthrow of the yoke of capitalism.

Imperialism subjects large masses of the proletariat of all countries—from the centres of capitalist power to the most remote corners of the colonial world—to the dictatorship of the finance capitalist plutocracy. With elemental force, imperialism exposes and accentuates all the contradictions of capitalist society; it carries class oppression to the utmost limits, intensifies the struggle between capitalist governments, inevitably gives rise to world-wide imperialist wars that shake the whole prevailing system of relationships to their foundations and inexorably leads to the world proletarian revolution.

Binding the whole world in chains of finance capital; forcing its yoke upon the proletariat and the nations and races of all countries by methods of blood, iron and starvation; sharpening

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to an immeasurable degree the exploitation, oppression and enslavement of the proletariat and confronting it with the immediate task of conquering power, imperialism creates the necessity for close union of the workers of all countries, irrespective of State frontiers and of differences of nationality, culture, language, race, sex or profession, in a single international army of the proletariat. Thus, while imperialism develops and completes the process of creating the material pre-requisites for socialism, at the same time it musters the army of its own grave-diggers and compels the proletariat to organise in a militant international association of workers.

On the other hand, imperialism splits off the best-provided-for section of the working class from the main mass of the workers. Bribed and corrupted by imperialism, this upper stratum of the working class constitutes the leading element in the social-democratic parties; it is interested in the imperialist plunder of the colonies, is loyal to its own bourgeoisie and "its own" imperialist State, and, in the midst of decisive battles, has fought on the side of the class enemy of the proletariat. The spilt that occurred in the socialist movement in 1914 as a result of this treachery, and the subsequent treachery of the social-democratic parties (which in reality have become bourgeois labour parties), demonstrated that the international proletariat will be able to fulfil its historical mission—to throw off the yoke of imperialism and establish the proletarian dictatorship—only by a ruthless struggle against social-democracy. Hence, the organisation of the forces of the international revolution becomes possible only on the platform of Communism. In opposition to the opportunist Second International of social-democracy—which has become the agency of imperialism in the ranks of the working class—inevitably rises the Third, Communist International, the international organisation of the working class, the embodiment of real unity of the revolutionary workers of the whole world.

The war of 1914-1918 gave rise to the first attempts to establish a new, revolutionary International, as a counter-poise to the Second, social-chauvinist International, and as a weapon



of resistance to bellicose imperialism (Zimmerwald and Kienthal). The victorious proletarian revolution in Russia gave an impetus to the formation of Communist Parties in the centres of capitalism and in the colonies. In 1919, the Communist International was formed, and for the first time in world history the most advanced strata of the European and American proletariat were really united in the process of practical revolutionary struggle with the proletariat of China and India and with the coloured toilers of Africa and America.

As the united and centralised international Party of the proletariat, the Communist International is the only Party to continue the principles of the First International, and to carry them out upon the new mass foundation of the revolutionary proletarian movement. The experience gathered from the first imperialist world war, from the subsequent period of revolutionary crises of capitalism, from the series of revolutions in Europe and in the colonial countries; the experience gathered from the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building up of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and from the work of all the Sections of the Communist International as recorded in the decisions of its Congresses; finally, the fact that the struggle between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the proletariat is more and more assuming an international character; all this creates the need for a uniform programme of the Communist International that shall be common for all Sections of the Communist International. This programme of the Communist International, being the supreme critical generalisation of the whole body of historical experience of the international revolutionary proletarian movement, becomes the programme of struggle for the world proletarian dictatorship, the programme of struggle for world Communism.

Uniting as it does the revolutionary workers, who lead the millions of oppressed and exploited against the bourgeoisie and its "socialist" agents, the Communist International regards itself as the historical successor to the "Communist League" and the First International led by Marx, and as the inheritor of the best of the pre-war traditions of the Second International.

The First International laid the ideological foundation for the international proletarian struggle for socialism. The Second International, in the best period of its existence, prepared the ground for the expansion of the labour movement among the masses. The Third, Communist International, in continuing the work of the First International, and in accepting the fruits of the work of the Second International, resolutely lopped off the latter's opportunism, social-chauvinism, and bourgeois distortion of socialism, and set out to realise the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this manner the Communist International continues the glorious and heroic traditions of the international labour movement of the English Chartists and French insurrectionists of 1831; of the French and German working class revolutionaries of 1848; of the immortal warriors and martyrs of the Paris Commune; of the valiant soldiers of the German, Hungarian and Finnish revolutions; of the workers under the former Tsarist despotism—the victorious bearers of the proletarian dictatorship; of the Chinese proletarians—the heroes of Canton and Shanghai.

Basing itself on the experience of the revolutionary labour movement of all continents and of all peoples, the Communist International, in its theoretical and practical work, stands wholly and unreservedly upon the ground of revolutionary Marxism, and its further development, Leninism, which is nothing else than Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Advocating and propagating the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels and employing it as a revolutionary method of conceiving reality, with the view to the revolutionary transformation of this reality, the Communist International wages an active struggle against all forms of bourgeois philosophy and against all forms of theoretical and practical opportunism. Standing on the ground of consistent proletarian class struggle and subordinating the temporary, partial, group and national interests of the proletariat to its lasting, general, international interests, the Communist International mercilessly exposes all forms of the doctrine of "class peace" that the reformists have

accepted from the bourgeoisie. Expressing the historical need for an international organisation of revolutionary proletarians—the grave-diggers of the capitalist order—the Communist International is the only international force that has for its programme the dictatorship of the proletariat and Communism, and that openly comes out as the organiser of the international proletarian revolution.

## **I. The World System of Capitalism, its Development and Inevitable Downfall**

### **1. The Dynamic Laws of Capitalism and the Epoch of Industrial Capital**

The characteristic features of capitalist society which arose on the basis of commodity production are the monopoly of the most important and vital means of production by the capitalist class and big landlords; the exploitation of the wage labour of the proletariat, which, being deprived of the means of production, is compelled to sell its labour power; the production of commodities for profit and, linked up with all this, the planless and anarchic character of the process of production as a whole. Exploitation relationships and the economic domination of the bourgeoisie find their political expression in the organised capitalist State—the instrument for the suppression of the proletariat.

The history of capitalism has entirely confirmed the theories of Marx and Engels concerning the laws of development of capitalist society and concerning the contradictions of this development that must inevitably lead to the downfall of the whole capitalist system.

In its quest for profits the bourgeoisie was compelled to develop the productive forces on an ever-increasing scale and to strengthen and expand the domination of capitalist relationships of production. Thus, the development of capitalism constantly reproduces on a wider scale all the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system, primarily, the vital contradiction between the social character of labour and private

acquisition, between the growth of the productive forces and the property relations of capitalism. The predominance of private property in the means of production and the anarchy prevailing in the process of production have disturbed the equilibrium between the various branches of production; for a growing contradiction developed between the tendency towards unlimited expansion of production and the restricted consumption of the masses of the proletariat (general over-production), and this resulted in periodical devastating crises and mass un-employment among the proletariat. The predominance of private property also found expression in the competition that prevailed in each separate capitalist country as well as on the constantly expanding world market. This latter form of capitalist rivalry resulted in a number of wars, which are the inevitable accompaniment of capitalist development.

On the other hand, the technical and economic advantages of mass production have resulted in the squeezing out and destruction in the competitive struggle of the pre-capitalist economic forms and to the ever-increasing concentration and centralisation of capital. In the sphere of industry this law of concentration and centralisation of capital manifested itself primarily in the direct ruin of small enterprises and partly in their being reduced to the position of auxiliary units of large enterprises. In the domain of agriculture which, owing to the existence of the monopoly in land and absolute rent, must inevitably lag behind the general rate of development, this law not only found expression in the process of differentiation that took place among the peasantry and in the proletarianisation of broad strata of the latter, but also, and mainly, in the open and concealed subordination of small peasant economy to the domination of big capital; small farming has been able to maintain a nominal independence only at the price of extreme intensification of labour and systematic under-consumption.

The ever-growing application of machinery, the constant improvement in technique and, consequently, the uninterrupted rise in the organic composition of capital, accompanied by still further division, increased productivity and intensity of labour, meant also increased employment of female and child labour.

the formation of enormous industrial reserve armies which are constantly replenished by the proletarianised peasantry who are forced to leave their villages as well as by the ruined small and middle urban bourgeoisie. The collection of handful of capitalist magnates at one end of social relationships and of a gigantic mass of the proletariat at the other; the constantly increasing rate of exploitation of the working class, the reproduction on a wider scale of the deepest contradictions of capitalism and their consequences (crises, wars, etc.); the constant growth of social inequality, the rising discontent of the proletariat, united and schooled by the mechanism of capitalist production itself—all this has inevitably undermined the foundations of capitalism and has brought nearer the day of its collapse.

Simultaneously, a profound change has taken place in the social and cultural life of capitalist society; the parasitical decadence of the rentier group of the bourgeoisie; the break-up of the family, which expresses the growing contradiction between the mass participation of women in social production and the forms of family and domestic life largely inherited from previous economic epochs; the growing shallowness and degeneracy of cultural and ideological life resulting from the minute specialisation of labour, the monstrous forms of urban life and the restrictedness of rural life; the incapability of the bourgeoisie, notwithstanding the enormous achievements of the natural sciences, to create a synthetically scientific philosophy, and the growth of ideological, mystical and religious superstition, are all phenomena signalling the approach of the historical end of the capitalist system.

## **2. The Era of Finance Capitalism: (Imperialism)**

The period of industrial capitalism was, in the main, a period of "free competition"; a period of a relatively smooth evolution and expansion of capitalism throughout the whole world, when the as yet unoccupied colonies were being divided up and conquered by armed force; a period of continuous growth of the inherent contradictions of capitalism, the burden of which fell mainly upon the systematically plundered, crushed and oppressed colonial periphery.

Towards the beginning of the 20th century, this period was replaced by the period of imperialism, during which capitalism developed spasmodically and conflictingly; free competition rapidly gave way to monopoly, the previously "available" colonial lands were all divided up, and the struggle for a redistribution of colonies and spheres of influence inevitably began to assume primarily the form of a struggle by force of arms.

Thus, the entire scope and truly world-wide scale of the contradictions of capitalism became most glaringly revealed in the epoch of imperialism (finance capitalism), which, from the historical standpoint, signifies a new form of capitalism, a new system of relationships between the various parts of world capitalist economy and a change in the relationship between the principal classes of capitalist society.

This new historical period set in as a result of the operation of the principal dynamic laws of capitalist society. It grew out of the development of industrial capitalism, and is the historical continuation of the latter. It sharpened the manifestations of all the fundamental tendencies and dynamic laws of capitalist development, of all its fundamental contradictions and antagonisms. The law of the concentration and centralisation of capital led to the formation of powerful combines (cartels, syndicates, trusts), to new forms of gigantic combinations of enterprises, linked up into one system by the banks. The merging of industrial capital with bank capital, the absorption of big land ownership into the general system of capitalist organisation, and the monopolist character of this form of capitalism transferred the epoch of industrial capital into the epoch of finance capital. "Free competition" of the period of industrial capitalism, which replaced feudal monopoly and the monopoly of merchant capital, became itself transformed into finance capital monopoly. At the same time, although capitalist monopolist organisations grow out of free competition, they do not eliminate competition, but exist side by side and hover over it, and thus give rise to a series of exceptionally great and acute contradictions, frictions and conflicts.

The growing use of complex machinery, of chemical processes and of electrical energy; the resulting higher organic composition of capital, and, consequently, decline in the rate of profit, which only the biggest monopolist combines are able to counteract for a time by their policy of high cartel prices, still further stimulate the quest for colonial super-profits and the struggle for a new division of the world. Standardised mass production creates the demand for new foreign markets. The growing demand for raw materials and fuel intensifies the race for their sources. Lastly, the system of high protection, which hinders the export of merchandise and secures additional profits for exported capital, creates additional stimuli to the export of capital. Export of capital becomes, therefore, the decisive and specific form of economic contact between the various parts of world capitalist economy. The total effect of all this is that the monopolist ownership of colonial markets, of sources of raw materials and of spheres of investment of capital extremely accentuates the general unevenness of capitalist development and sharpens the conflicts between the "Great Powers" of finance capital over the redistribution of the colonies and spheres of influence.

The growth of the productive forces of world economy thus leads to the further internationalisation of economic life and simultaneously leads to a struggle for a redistribution of the world already divided up among the biggest finance capital States, to a change in, and sharpening of, the forms of this struggle and to the method of forcing down prices being superseded to an increasing degree by the method of forcible pressure (boycott, high protection, tariff wars, wars proper, etc.). Consequently, the monopolist form of capitalism is inevitably accompanied by imperialist wars, which, by the area they embrace and the destructiveness of their technique, have no parallel in world history.

### **3. The Forces of Imperialism and the Forces of Revolution**

Expressing the tendency for unification of the various sections of the dominant class, the imperialist form of capitalism places

the broad masses of the proletariat in opposition, not to a single employer, but, to an increasing degree, to the capitalist class as a whole and to the capitalist State. On the other hand, this form of capitalism breaks down the national barriers that have become too restricted for it, widens the scope of the capitalist State power of the dominant Great Power and brings it in opposition to vast masses of nationally oppressed peoples in the so-called small nations as well as in the colonies. Finally, this form of capitalism brings the imperialist States most sharply in opposition to each other.

This being the case, State power, which is becoming the dictatorship of the finance capitalist oligarchy and the expression of its concentrated might, acquires special significance for the bourgeoisie. The functions of this multi-national imperialist State grow in all directions. The development of State capitalist forms, which facilitate the struggle in foreign markets (mobilisation of industry for war purposes) as well as the struggle against the working class; the monstrous growth of militarism (armies, naval and air fleets, and the employment of chemistry and bacteriology); the increasing pressure of the imperialist State upon the working class (the growth of exploitation and direct suppression of the workers, on the one hand, and the systematic policy of bribing the bureaucratic reformist leadership, on the other), all this expresses the enormous growth of the power of the State. Under these circumstances, more or less every important action of the proletariat becomes transformed into an action against the State power, i.e., into political action.

Hence, the development of capitalism, and particularly the imperialist epoch of its development, reproduces the fundamental contradictions of capitalism on an increasingly magnified scale. Competition among small capitalists ceases, only to make way for competition among big capitalists; where competition among big capitalists subsides, it flares up between gigantic combinations of capitalist magnates and their governments; local and national crises become transformed into crises affecting a number of countries and, subsequently, into world crises:



local wars give way to wars between coalitions of States and to world wars; the class struggle changes from isolated actions of single groups of workers into nation-wide conflicts and, subsequently, into an international struggle of the world proletariat against the world bourgeoisie. Finally, two main revolutionary forces are organising against the organised might of finance capital—on the one hand, *the worker in the capitalist States*, on the other hand, the victims of the oppression of foreign capital, *the masses of the people in the colonies*, marching under the leadership and the hegemony of the international revolutionary proletarian movement.

However, this fundamental revolutionary tendency is temporarily paralysed by the fact that certain sections of the European, North American and Japanese proletariat are bribed by the imperialist bourgeoisie, and by the treachery of the national bourgeoisie in the semi-colonial and colonial countries who are scared by the revolutionary mass movement. The bourgeoisie in imperialist countries, able to secure additional surplus profits from the position it holds in the world market (more developed technique, export of capital to countries with a higher rate of profit, etc.), and from the proceeds of its plunder of the colonies and semi-colonies, was able to raise the wages of its "own" workers out of these surplus profits, thus giving these workers an interest in the development of "home" capitalism, in the plunder of the colonies and in being loyal to the imperialist State.

This systematic bribery was and is being very widely practised in the most powerful imperialist countries and finds most striking expression in the ideology and practice of the labour aristocracy and the bureaucratic strata of the working class, i.e., the social-democratic and trade union leaders, who proved to be the direct agencies of bourgeois influence among the proletariat and stalwart pillars of the capitalist system.

By stimulating the growth of the corrupt upper stratum of the working class, however, imperialism, in the end, destroys its influence upon the working class, because the growing contradictions of imperialism, the worsening of the conditions of the broad masses of the workers, the mass unemployment

among the proletariat, the enormous cost of military conflicts and the burdens they entail, the fact that certain Powers have lost their monopolist position in the world market, the break-away of the colonies, etc., serve to undermine the basis of social-democracy among the masses. Similarly, the systematic bribery of the various sections of the bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies, their betrayal of the national-revolutionary movement and their rapprochement with the imperialist Powers can paralyse the development of the revolutionary crisis only for a time. In the final analysis, this leads to the intensification of imperialist oppression, to the decline of the influence of the national bourgeoisie upon the masses of the people, to the sharpening of the revolutionary crisis, to the unleashing of the agrarian revolution of the broad masses of the peasantry and to the creation of conditions favourable for the establishment of the leadership of the proletariat in the colonies and dependencies in the popular mass struggle for independence and complete national liberation.

#### **4. Imperialism and the Downfall of Capitalism**

Imperialism has greatly developed the productive forces of world capitalism. It has completed the preparation of all the material pre-requisites for the socialist organisation of society. By its wars it has demonstrated that the productive forces of world economy, which have outgrown the restricted boundaries of imperialist States, demand the organisation of economy on a world, or international scale. Imperialism tries to remove this contradiction by hacking a road with fire and sword towards a single world State-capitalist trust, which is to organise the whole world economy. This sanguinary utopia is being extolled by the social-democratic ideologists as a peaceful method of newly "organised" capitalism. In reality, this utopia encounters insurmountable objective obstacles of such magnitude that capitalism must inevitably fall beneath the weight of its own contradictions. The law of uneven development of capitalism, which becomes intensified in the epoch of imperialism, renders firm and durable international

combinations of imperialist Powers impossible. On the other hand, imperialist wars, which are developing into world wars, and by which the law of the centralisation of capitalism strives to reach its world limit—a single world trust—are accompanied by so much destruction and place such burdens upon the shoulders of the working class and of the millions of colonial proletarians and peasants, that capitalism must inevitably perish beneath the blows of the proletarian revolution long before this goal is reached.

Being the highest phase of capitalist development, developing the productive forces of world economy to enormous dimensions, refashioning the whole world after its own image, imperialism draws within the orbit of finance capitalist exploitation all colonies, all races and all nations. At the same time, however, the monopolist form of capital increasingly develops the elements of parasitical degeneration, decay and decline of capitalism. In destroying, to some extent, the driving force of competition, by conducting a policy of cartel prices and by having undivided mastery of the market, monopoly capital reveals a tendency to retard the further development of the forces of production. In squeezing enormous sums of surplus profits out of the millions of colonial workers and peasants and in accumulating colossal incomes from this exploitation, imperialism is creating a type of decaying and parasitically degenerate rentier class, as well as whole strata of parasites who live by clipping coupons. In completing the process of creating the material pre-requisites for socialism (the concentration of the means of production, the enormous socialisation of labour, the growth of labour organisations), the epoch of imperialism intensifies the antagonisms among the "Great Powers" and gives rise to wars which cause the break-up of single world economy. Imperialism is, therefore, moribund and decaying capitalism. It is the final stage of development of the capitalist system. It is the threshold of world social revolution.

Hence, international proletarian revolution logically emerges out of the conditions of development of capitalism generally, and out of its imperialist phase in particular. The capitalist

system as a whole is approaching its final collapse. The dictatorship of finance capital is perishing to give way to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## **II. The General Crisis of Capitalism and the First Phase of World Revolution**

### **1. The World War and the Progress of the Revolutionary Crisis**

The imperialist struggle among the largest capitalist States for the redistribution of the globe led to the first imperialist world war (1914-1918). This war shook the whole system of world capitalism and marked the beginning of the period of its general crises. It bent to its service the entire national economy of the belligerent countries, thus creating the mailed fist of State capitalism; it increased unproductive expenditures to enormous dimensions, destroyed enormous quantities of the means of production and human labour power, ruined large masses of the population and imposed incalculable burdens upon the industrial workers, the peasants and the colonial peoples. It inevitably led to the intensification of the class struggle, which grew into open, revolutionary mass action and civil war. The imperialist front was broken at its weakest link, in Tsarist Russia. The February revolution of 1917 overthrew the domination of the autocracy of the big land-owning class. The October revolution overthrew the rule of the bourgeoisie. This victorious proletarian revolution expropriated the expropriators, took the means of production from the landlords and the capitalists, and for the first time in human history set up and consolidated the dictatorship of the proletariat in an enormous country, brought into being a new, Soviet type of State and laid the foundations for the international proletarian revolution.

The powerful shock to which the whole of world capitalism was subjected, the sharpening of the class struggle and the direct influence of the October proletarian revolution gave rise to a series of revolutions and revolutionary actions on the continent of Europe as well as in the colonial and semi-colonial countries;

January 1918, the proletarian revolution in Finland; August 1918, the so-called "rice riots" in Japan; November 1918, the revolutions in Austria and Germany, which overthrew the semi-feudal monarchist regime; March 1919, the proletarian revolution in Hungary and the uprising in Korea; April 1919, the Soviet Government in Bavaria; January 1920, the bourgeois-national revolution in Turkey; September 1920, the seizure of the factories by the workers in Italy; March 1921, the rising of the advanced workers of Germany; September 1923, the uprising in Bulgaria; Autumn 1923, the revolutionary crisis in Germany; December 1924, the uprising in Esthonia; April 1925, the uprising in Morocco; August 1925, the uprising in Syria; May 1926, the general strike in England; July 1927, the proletarian uprising in Vienna. These events as well as events like the uprising in Indonesia, the deep ferment in India, the great Chinese revolution, which shook the whole Asiatic continent, are links in one and the same international revolutionary chain, constituent parts of the profound general crisis of capitalism. This international revolutionary process embraced the immediate struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as national wars of liberation and colonial uprisings against imperialism, which go together with the agrarian mass movement of millions of peasants. Thus, an enormous mass of humanity was swept into the revolutionary torrent. World history entered a new phase of development—a phase of prolonged general crisis of the capitalist system. In this process, the unity of world economy found expression in the international character of the revolution, while the uneven development of its separate parts was expressed in the different times of the outbreak of revolution in the different countries.

The first attempts at revolutionary overthrow, which sprang from the acute crisis of capitalism (1918-1921), ended in the victory and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. and in the defeat of the proletariat in a number of other countries. These defeats were primarily due to the treacherous tactics of the social-democratic and reformist trade union leaders, but they were also due to the fact that the majority

of the working class had not yet accepted the lead of the Communists and that in a number of important countries the Communist Parties had not yet been established at all. As a result of these defeats, which created the opportunity for intensifying the exploitation of the mass of the proletariat and the colonial peoples, and for severely depressing their standard of living, the bourgeoisie was able to achieve a partial stabilisation of capital relations.

## **2. The Revolutionary Crisis and Counter-Revolutionary Social-Democracy**

During the progress of the international revolution, the leading cadres of the social-democratic parties and of the reformist trade unions, on the one hand, and the militant capitalist organisations of the fascist type, on the other, acquired special significance as a powerful counter-revolutionary force actively fighting against the revolution and actively supporting the partial stabilisation of capitalism.

The war crisis of 1914-1918 was accompanied by the disgraceful collapse of the social-democratic Second International. Acting in complete violation of the thesis of the "Communist Manifesto" written by Marx and Engels, that the proletariat has no fatherland under capitalism, and in complete violation of the anti-war resolutions passed by the Stuttgart and Basel Congresses, the leaders of the social-democratic parties in the various countries, with a few exceptions, voted for the war credits, came out definitely in defence of the imperialist "fatherland" (i.e., the State organisations of the imperialist bourgeoisie) and instead of combating the imperialist war, became its loyal soldiers, bards and propagandists (social-patriotism, which grew into social-imperialism). In the subsequent period, social-democracy supported the predatory treaties (Brest-Litovsk, Versailles); it actively aligned itself with the militarists in the bloody suppression of proletarian uprisings (Noske); it conducted armed warfare against the first proletarian republic (Soviet Russia); it despicably betrayed the victorious

proletariat (Hungary); it joined the imperialist League of Nations (Albert Thomas, Paul Boncour, Vandervelde); it openly supported the imperialist slave-owners against the colonial slaves (the British Labour Party); it actively supported the most reactionary executioners of the working class (Bulgaria, Poland); it took upon itself the initiative in securing the passage of imperialist "military laws" (France); it betrayed the general strike of the British proletariat; it helped, and is still helping, to strangle China and India (the MacDonald Government); it acts as the propagandist for the imperialist League of Nations; it is capital's herald and organiser of the struggle against the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. (Kautsky, Hilferding).

In its systematic conduct of this counter-revolutionary policy, social-democracy operates on two flanks; the right wing of social-democracy, avowedly counter-revolutionary, is essential for negotiating and maintaining direct contact with the bourgeoisie; the left wing is essential for the subtle deception of the workers. While playing with pacifist and at times even with revolutionary phrases, "left wing" social-democracy in practice acts against the workers, particularly in acute and critical situations (the British I.L.P. and "left" leaders of the General Council during the general strike in 1926; Otto Bauer and Co., at the time of the Vienna uprising), and is, therefore, the most dangerous faction in the social-democratic parties. While serving the interests of the bourgeoisie in the working class and being wholly in favour of class co-operation and coalition with the bourgeoisie, social-democracy, at certain periods, is compelled to play the part of an opposition party and even to pretend that it is defending the class interests of the proletariat in its industrial struggle, in order, thereby, to win the confidence of a section of the working class and to be in a position more shamefully to betray the lasting interests of the working class, particularly in the midst of decisive class battles.

The principal function of social-democracy, at the present time, is to disrupt the essential militant unity of the proletariat

in its struggle against imperialism. In splitting and disrupting the united front of the proletarian struggle against capital, social-democracy serves as the mainstay of imperialism in the working class. International social-democracy of all shades—the Second International and its trade union branch, the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions—have thus become the last reserve of bourgeois society and its most reliable pillar of support.

### **3. The Crisis of Capitalism and Fascism**

Side by side with social-democracy, with whose aid the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers or lulls their class vigilance, stands fascism.

The epoch of imperialism, the sharpening of the class struggle and the growth of the elements of civil war—particularly after the imperialist war—led to the bankruptcy of parliamentarism. Hence, the adoption of “new” methods and forms of administration (for example, the system of inner cabinets, the formation of oligarchical groups, acting behind the scenes, the deterioration and falsification of the function of “popular representation,” the restriction and annulment of “democratic liberties,” etc.). Under certain special historical conditions, the progress of this bourgeois, imperialist, reactionary offensive assumes the form of fascism. These conditions are : instability of capitalist relationships; the existence of considerable declassed social elements, the pauperisation of broad strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and of the intelligentsia; discontent among the rural petty bourgeoisie and, finally, the constant menace of mass proletarian action. In order to stabilise and perpetuate its rule, the bourgeoisie is compelled to an increasing degree to abandon the parliamentary system in favour of the fascist system, which is independent of inter-party arrangements and combinations. The fascist system is a system of direct dictatorship, ideologically marked by the “national idea” and representation of the “professions” (in reality, representation of the various groups of the ruling class). It is a system that resorts to a peculiar form of social demagoguery (anti-semitism, occasional



sorties against usurers' capital and gestures of impatience with the parliamentary "talking shop") in order to utilise the discontent of the petty bourgeois, the intellectuals and other strata of society, and to corruption—the creation of a compact and well-paid hierarchy of fascist units, a party apparatus and a bureaucracy. At the same time, fascism strives to permeate the working class by recruiting the most backward strata of workers to its ranks, by playing upon their discontent, by taking advantage of the inaction of social-democracy, etc. The principal aim of fascism is to destroy the revolutionary labour vanguard, i.e., the Communist Sections and leading units of the proletariat. The combination of social-democracy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics, are the characteristic features of fascism. In periods of acute crisis for the bourgeoisie, fascism resorts to anti-capitalist phraseology, but, after it has established itself at the helm of State, it casts aside its anti-capitalist rattle and discloses itself as a terrorist dictatorship of big capital.

The bourgeoisie resorts either to the method of fascism or to the method of coalition with social-democracy, according to the changes in the political situation; while social-democracy itself often plays a fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism.

In the process of development social-democracy reveals fascist tendencies which, however, do not prevent it, in other political situations, from acting as a sort of *Fronde* against the bourgeois government in the capacity of an opposition party. The fascist method and the method of coalition with social-democracy, are not the methods usually employed in "normal" capitalist conditions; they are the symptoms of the general capitalist crisis, and are employed by the bourgeoisie in order to stem the advance of the revolution.

#### **4. The Contradictions of Capitalist Stabilisation and the Inevitability of the Revolutionary Collapse of Capitalism**

Experience throughout the post-war historical period has shown that the stabilisation achieved by the repression of the working

class and the systematic depression of its standard of living can be only a partial, transient and decaying stabilisation.

The spasmodic and feverish development of technique, bordering in some countries on a new technical revolution, the accelerated process of concentration and centralisation of capital, the formation of giant trusts and of "national" and "international" monopolies, the merging of trusts with the State power and the growth of world capitalist economy cannot, however, eliminate the general crisis of the capitalist system. The break-up of world economy into a capitalist and a socialist sector, the shrinking of markets and the anti-imperialist movement in the colonies intensify all the contradictions of capitalism, which is developing on a new, post-war basis. This very technical progress and rationalisation of industry, the reverse side of which is the closing down and liquidation of numerous enterprises, the restriction of production, and the ruthless and destructive exploitation of labour power, leads to chronic unemployment on a scale never before experienced. The absolute deterioration of the conditions of the working class becomes a fact even in certain highly developed capitalist countries. The growing competition between imperialist countries, the constant menace of war and the growing intensity of class conflicts prepare the ground for a new and higher stage of development of the general crisis of capitalism and of the world proletarian revolution.

As a result of the first round of imperialist wars (the world war of 1914-18) and of the October victory of the working class in the former Russian Tsarist Empire, world economy has been split into two fundamentally hostile camps : the camp of the imperialist States and the camp of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. The difference in structure and in the class character of the government in the two camps, the fundamental differences in the aims each pursues in internal, foreign, economic and cultural policy, the fundamentally different courses of their development, brings the capitalist world into sharp conflict with the victorious proletarian State. Within the framework of a formerly uniform world economy, two antagonistic

systems are now contesting against each other : the system of capitalism and the system of socialism. The class struggle, which hitherto was conducted in circumstances when the proletariat was not in possession of State power, is now being conducted on an enormous and really world scale; the working class of the world has now its own State—the one and only fatherland of the international proletariat. The existence of the Soviet Union and the influence it exercises upon the toiling and oppressed masses all over the world is in itself a most striking expression of the profound crisis of the world capitalist system and of the expansion and intensification of the class struggle to a degree hitherto without parallel in history.

The capitalist world, powerless to eliminate its inherent contradictions, strives to establish international associations (the League of Nations) the main purpose of which is to retard the irresistible growth of the revolutionary crisis and to strangle the Soviet Proletarian Republics by war or blockade. At the same time, all the forces of the revolutionary proletariat and of the oppressed colonial masses are rallying around the U.S.S.R. The world coalition of *Capital*, unstable, internally corroded, but armed to the teeth, is confronted by a single world coalition of *Labour*. Thus, as a result of the first round of imperialist wars, a new, fundamental antagonism has arisen of world historical scope and significance : the antagonism between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world.

Meanwhile, the inherent antagonisms within the capitalist sector of world economy itself have become intensified. The shifting of the economic centre of the world to the United States of America and the fact of the "Dollar Republic" having become a world exploiter have caused the relations between the United States and European capitalism, particularly British capitalism, to become strained. The conflict between Great Britain—the most powerful of the old, conservative imperialist States, and the United States—the greatest of the young imperialist States, which has already won world hegemony for itself, is becoming the pivot of the world conflicts among the finance capitalist States. Germany, though plundered by the Versailles

Peace, is now economically recovered; she is resuming the path of imperialist politics, and once again she stands out as a serious competitor on the world market. The Pacific is becoming involved in a tangle of contradictions which centre mainly around the antagonism between America and Japan. Simultaneously, the antagonism of interests among the unstable and constantly changing groupings of powers is increasing, while the minor powers serve as auxiliary instruments in the hands of the imperialist giants and their coalitions.

The growth of the productive capacity of the industrial apparatus of world capitalism, at a time when the European home markets have shrunk as a result of the war, as the result of the Soviet Union dropping out of the system of purely capitalist intercourse and of the close monopoly of the most important sources of raw material and fuel, leads to ever-widening conflicts between the capitalist States. The "peaceful" struggle for oil, rubber, cotton, coal and metals and for a redistribution of markets and spheres for the export of capital is inexorably leading to *another world war*, the destructiveness of which will increase in proportion to the progress achieved in the furiously developing technique of war.

Simultaneously, the antagonisms between the *imperialist home countries and the semi-colonial countries* are growing. The relative weakening of European imperialism as a result of the war, of the development of capitalism in the colonies, of the influence of the Soviet revolution and of the centrifugal tendencies revealed in the premier maritime and colonial Empire—Great Britain (Canada, Australia, South Africa)—has helped to stimulate the movement of rebellion in the colonies and semi-colonies. The great Chinese revolution, which roused hundreds of millions of the Chinese people to action, caused an enormous breach in the imperialist system. The unceasing revolutionary ferment among hundreds of millions of Indian workers and peasants is threatening to break the domination of the world citadel of imperialism, Great Britain. The growth of tendencies directed against the powerful imperialism of the United States in the Latin American countries threatens to

undermine the expansion of North American capital. Thus, the revolutionary process in the colonies, which is drawing into the struggle against imperialism the overwhelming majority of the world's population that is subjected to the rule of the finance capitalist oligarchy of a few "Great Powers" of imperialism also expresses the profound general crisis of a capitalism. Even in Europe itself, where imperialism has put a number of small nations under its heel, the national question is a factor that intensifies the inherent contradictions of capitalism.

Finally, the revolutionary crisis is inexorably maturing in the very centres of imperialism: the capitalist offensive against the working class, the attack upon the workers' standard of living, upon their organisations and their political rights, and the growth of white terror, rouse increasing resistance on the part of the broad masses of the proletariat and intensify the class struggle between the working class and trustified capital. The great battles fought between Labour and Capital, the accelerated swing to the left of the masses, the growth in the influence and authority of the Communist Parties; the enormous growth of sympathy of the broad masses of workers for the land of the proletarian dictatorship—all this is a clear symptom of the rise of a new tide in the centres of imperialism.

Thus, the system of world imperialism, and with it the partial stabilisation of capitalism, is being corroded from various causes: First, the antagonisms and conflicts between the imperialist States; second, the rising for the struggle of vast masses in the colonial countries; third, the action of the revolutionary proletariat in the imperialist home countries; and lastly, the leadership exercised over the whole world revolutionary movement by the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. The international revolution is developing.

Against this revolution, imperialism is gathering its forces. Expeditions against the colonies, a new world war, a campaign against the U.S.S.R., are matters which now figure prominently in the politics of imperialism. This must lead to the release of all the forces of international revolution and to the inevitable doom of capitalism.

### **III. The Ultimate Aim of the Communist International—World Communism**

The ultimate aim of the Communist International is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of Communism. Communist society, the basis for which has been prepared by the whole course of historical development, is mankind's only way out, for it alone can abolish the contradictions of the capitalist system which threaten to degrade and destroy the human race.

Communist society will abolish the class division of society, i.e., simultaneously with the abolition of anarchy in production, it will abolish all forces of exploitation and oppression of man by man. Society will no longer consist of antagonistic classes in conflict with each other, but will represent a united commonwealth of labour. For the first time in its history mankind will take its fate into its own hands. Instead of destroying innumerable human lives and incalculable wealth in struggles between classes and nations, mankind will devote all its energy to the struggle against the forces of nature, to the development and strengthening of its own collective might.

After abolishing private ownership in the means of production and converting them into social property, the world system of Communism will replace the elemental forces of the world market, of competition and the blind process of social production, by consciously organised and planned production for the purpose of satisfying rapidly growing social needs. With the abolition of competition and anarchy in production, devastating crises and still more devastating wars will disappear. Instead of colossal waste of productive forces and spasmodic development of society there will be planned utilisation of all material resources and painless economic development on the basis of unrestricted, smooth and rapid development of productive forces.

The abolition of private property and the disappearance of classes will do away with the exploitation of man by man. Work will cease to be toiling for the benefit of a class enemy:

instead of being merely a means of livelihood it will become a necessity of life; want and economic inequality, the misery of enslaved classes, and a wretched standard of life generally will disappear; the hierarchy created in the division of labour system will be abolished together with the antagonism between mental and manual labour; and the last vestige of the social inequality of sexes will be removed. At the same time, the organs of class domination, and the State in the first place, will disappear also. The State, being the embodiment of class domination, will die out in so far as classes die out, and with it all measures of coercion will expire.

With the disappearance of classes the monopoly of education in every form will be abolished. Culture will become the acquirement of all and the class ideologies of the past will give place to scientific materialist philosophy. Under such circumstances, the domination of man over man, in any form, becomes impossible, and a great field will be opened for the social selection and the harmonious development of all the talents inherent in humanity.

In Communist society no social restrictions will be imposed upon the growth of the forces of production. Private ownership in the means of production, the selfish lust for profits, the artificial retention of the masses in a state of ignorance and poverty—which retards technical progress in capitalist society—and unproductive expenditures will have no place in a Communist society. The most expedient utilisation of the forces of nature and of the natural conditions of production in the various parts of the world, the removal of the antagonism between town and country, that under capitalism results from the low technical level of agriculture and its systematic lagging behind industry; the closest possible co-operation between science and technique, the utmost encouragement of research work and the practical application of its results on the widest possible social scale; planned organisation of scientific work; the application of the most perfect methods of statistical accounting and planned regulation of economy; the rapidly growing social needs, which is the most powerful internal driving force of the

whole system—all these will secure the maximum productivity of social labour, which in turn will release human energy for the powerful development of science and art.

The development of the productive forces of world Communist society will make it possible to raise the well-being of the whole of humanity and to reduce to a minimum the time devoted to material production and, consequently, will enable culture to flourish as never before in history. This new culture of a humanity that is united for the first time in history, and has abolished all State boundaries, will, unlike capitalist culture, be based upon clear and transparent human relationships. Hence, it will bury for ever all mysticism, religion, prejudice and superstition, and will give a powerful impetus to the development of all-conquering, scientific knowledge.

This higher stage of Communism, the stage in which Communist society has already developed on its own foundation, in which an enormous growth of social productive forces has accompanied the manifold development of man, in which humanity has already inscribed on its banner : "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!"—presupposes, as an historical condition precedent, a lower stage of development, the stage of socialism. At this lower stage, Communist society only just emerges from capitalist society and bears all the economic, ethical and intellectual birthmarks it has inherited from the society from whose womb it is just emerging. The productive forces of socialism are not yet sufficiently developed to assure a distribution of the products of labour according to needs : these are distributed according to the amount of labour expended. Division of labour, i.e., the system whereby certain groups perform certain labour functions, and especially the distinction between mental and manual labour, still exists. Although classes are abolished, traces of the old class division of society and, consequently, remnants of the proletarian State power, coercion, laws, still exist. Consequently, certain traces of inequality, which have not yet managed to die out altogether, still remain. The antagonism between town and country has not yet been entirely removed. But none of these



survivals of former society is protected or defended by any social force. Being the product of a definite level of development of productive forces, they will disappear as rapidly as mankind, freed from the fetters of the capitalist system, subjugates the forces of nature, re-educates itself in the spirit of Communism, and passes from socialism to complete Communism.

#### **IV. The Period of Transition from Capitalism to Socialism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

##### **1. The Transition Period and the Conquest of Power by the Proletariat**

Between Capitalist society and Communist society a period of revolutionary transformation intervenes, during which the one changes into the other. Correspondingly, there is also an intervening period of political transition, in which the essential State form is the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. The transition from the world dictatorship of imperialism to the world dictatorship of the proletariat extends over a long period of proletarian struggles with defeats as well as victories; a period of continuous general crisis in capitalist relationship and growth of social revolutions, i.e., of proletarian civil wars against the bourgeoisie; a period of national wars and colonial rebellions which, although not in themselves revolutionary proletarian socialist movements, are, nevertheless, objectively, in so far as they undermine the domination of imperialism, constituent parts of the world proletarian revolution; a period in which capitalist and socialist economic and social systems exist side by side in "peaceful" relationships as well as in armed conflict; a period of formation of a Union of Soviet Republics; a period of wars of imperialist States against Soviet States; a period in which the ties between the Soviet States and colonial peoples become more and more closely established, etc.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. This unevenness is still more pronounced and acute in the epoch of imperialism. Hence, it follows that the international proletarian revolution cannot be conceived as a

single event occurring simultaneously all over the world; at first socialism may be victorious in a few, or even in one single capitalist country. Every such proletarian victory, however, broadens the basis of the world revolution and consequently, still further intensifies the general crisis of capitalism. Thus, the capitalist system as a whole reaches the point of its final collapse; the dictatorship of finance capital perishes and gives place to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Bourgeois revolutions brought about the political liberation of a system of productive relationships that had already established itself and become economically dominant, and transferred political power from the hands of one class of exploiters to the hands of another. Proletarian revolution, however, signifies the forcible invasion of the proletariat into the domain of property relationships of bourgeois society, the expropriation of the expropriating classes, and the transference of power to a class that aims at the radical reconstruction of the economic foundations of society and the abolition of all exploitation of man by man. The political domination of the feudal barons all over the world was broken in a series of separate bourgeois revolutions that extended over a period of centuries. The international proletarian revolution, however, although it will not be a single simultaneous act, but one extending over a whole epoch, nevertheless, thanks to the closer ties that now exist between the countries of the world, will accomplish its mission in a much shorter period of time. Only after the proletariat has achieved victory and consolidated its power all over the world will a prolonged period of intensive construction of world socialist economy set in.

The conquest of power by the proletariat is a necessary condition precedent to the growth of socialist forms of economy and to the cultural growth of the proletariat, which changes its own nature, perfects itself for the leadership of society in all spheres of life, draws into this process of transformation all other classes and thus prepares the ground for the abolition of classes altogether.

In the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and later

for the transformation of the social system, as against the alliance of capitalists and landlords an alliance of workers and peasants is formed, under the intellectual and political leadership of the former, an alliance which serves as the basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The characteristic feature of the transition period as a whole is the ruthless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, the organisation of socialist construction, the mass training of men and women in the spirit of socialism and the gradual disappearance of classes. Only to the extent that these great historical tasks are fulfilled will society of the transition period become transformed into Communist society.

Thus, the dictatorship of the world proletariat is an essential and vital condition precedent to the transition of world capitalist economy to socialist economy. This world dictatorship can be established only when the victory of socialism has been achieved in certain countries or groups of countries, when the newly established proletarian republics enter into a federal union with the already existing proletarian republics, when the number of such federations has grown and extended also to the colonies which have emancipated themselves from the yoke of imperialism, when these federations of republics have finally grown into a World Union of Soviet Socialist Republics uniting the whole of mankind under the hegemony of the international proletariat organised as a State.

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not mean peacefully "capturing" the ready-made bourgeois State machinery by means of a parliamentary majority. The bourgeoisie resorts to every means of violence and terror to safeguard and strengthen its predatory property and its political domination. Like the feudal nobility of the past, the bourgeoisie cannot abandon its historical position to the new class without a desperate and frantic struggle. Hence, the violence of the bourgeoisie can be suppressed only by the stern violence of the proletariat. The conquest of power by the proletariat is the violent overthrow of bourgeois power, the destruction of the capitalist State apparatus (bourgeois armies, police, bureaucratic hierarchy, the

judiciary, parliaments, etc.), and substituting in its place new organs of proletarian power, to serve primarily as instruments for the suppression of the exploiters.

## **2. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and its Soviet Form**

As has been shown by the experience of the October revolution of 1917 and by the Hungarian revolution, which immeasurably enlarged the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, the most suitable form of proletarian State is the Soviet State—a new type of State—which differs in principle from the bourgeois State, not only in its class content, but also in its internal structure. This is precisely the type of State which, emerging as it does directly out of the broadest possible mass movement of the toilers, secures the maximum of mass activity and is, consequently, the surest guarantee of final victory.

The Soviet form of State, being the highest form of democracy, namely, proletarian democracy, is the very opposite of bourgeois democracy, which is bourgeois dictatorship in a masked form. The Soviet State is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of a single class—the proletariat. Unlike bourgeois democracy, proletarian democracy openly admits its class character and aims avowedly at the suppression of the exploiters in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population. It deprives its class enemies of political rights and, under special historical conditions, may grant the proletariat a number of temporary advantages over the diffused petty-bourgeois peasantry in order to strengthen its role of leader. While disarming and suppressing its class enemies, the proletarian State at the same time regards this deprivation of political rights and partial restriction of liberty as temporary measures in the struggle against the attempts on the part of the exploiters to defend or restore their privileges. It inscribes on its banner the motto: the proletariat holds power not for the purpose of perpetuating it, not for the purpose of protecting narrow craft and professional interests, but for the purpose of uniting the backward and scattered rural proletariat, the semi-proletariat and the

toiling peasants still more closely with the more progressive strata of the workers, for the purpose of gradually and systematically overcoming class divisions altogether. Being an all-embracing form of the unity and organisation of the masses under the leadership of the proletariat, the Soviets, in actual fact, draw the broad masses of the proletariat, the peasants and all toilers into the struggle for socialism, into the work of building up socialism, and into the practical administration of the State; in the whole of their work they rely upon the working-class organisations and practice the principles of broad democracy among the toilers to a far greater extent and immeasurably closer to the masses than any other form of government. The right of electing and recalling delegates, the combination of the executive with the legislative power, the electoral system based on a production and not on a residential qualification (election by workshops, factories, etc.)—all this secures for the working class and for the broad masses of the toilers who march under its leadership, systematic, continuous and active participation in all public affairs—economic, social, political, military and cultural—and marks the sharp difference that exists between the bourgeois-parliamentary republic and the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat.

Bourgeois democracy, with its formal equality of all citizens before the law, is in reality based on a glaring material and economic inequality of classes. By leaving inviolable, defending and strengthening the monopoly of the capitalist and landlord classes in the vital means of production, bourgeois democracy, as far as the exploited classes and especially the proletariat is concerned, converts this formal equality before the law and these democratic rights and liberties—which in practice are systematically curtailed—into a juridical fiction and, consequently, into a means for deceiving and enslaving the masses. Being the expression of the political domination of the bourgeoisie, the so-called democracy is, therefore, capitalist democracy. By depriving the exploiting classes of the means of production, by placing the monopoly of these means of production in the hands of the proletariat as the dominant

class in society, the Soviet State, first and foremost, guarantees to the working class and to the toilers generally the material conditions for the exercise of their rights by providing them with premises, public buildings, printing plants, travelling facilities, etc.

In the domain of general political rights the Soviet State, while depriving the exploiters and the enemies of the people of political rights, completely abolishes for the first time all inequality of citizenship, which under systems of exploitation is based on distinctions of sex, religion and nationality; in this sphere it establishes an equality that is not to be found in any bourgeois country. In this respect also, the dictatorship of the proletariat steadily lays down the material basis upon which this equality may be truly exercised—by introducing measures for the emancipation of women, the industrialisation of former colonies, etc.

Soviet democracy, therefore, is proletarian democracy, democracy of the toiling masses, democracy directed against the exploiters.

The Soviet State completely disarms the bourgeoisie and concentrates all arms in the hands of the proletariat; it is the armed proletarian State. The armed forces under the Soviet State are organised on a class basis, which corresponds to the general structure of the proletarian dictatorship, and guarantees the role of leadership to the industrial proletariat. This organisation, while maintaining revolutionary discipline, ensures to the warriors of the Red Army and Navy close and constant contacts with the masses of the toilers, participation in the administration of the country and in the work of building up socialism.

### **3. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Expropriation of the Expropriators**

The victorious proletariat utilises the conquest of power as a lever of economic revolution, i.e., the revolutionary transformation of the property relations of capitalism into relationships of the socialist mode of production. The starting point of this great economic revolution is the expropriation of the landlords

and capitalists, i.e., the conversion of the monopolist property of the bourgeoisie into the property of the proletarian State.

In this sphere the Communist International advances the following fundamental tasks of the proletarian dictatorship :

**(A) INDUSTRY, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

(a) The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of all large private capitalist undertakings (factories, works, mines and electric power stations), and the transference of all State and municipal enterprises to the Soviets.

(b) The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of private capitalist railway, waterway, automobile and air transport services (commercial and passenger air fleet) and the transference of all State and municipal transport services to the Soviets.

(c) The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of private capitalist communication services (telegraph, telephones and radio) and the transference of State and municipal communication services to the Soviets.

(d) The organisation of workers' management of industry. The establishment of State organs for the management of industry with provision for the close participation of the trade unions in this work of management. Appropriate functions to be guaranteed for the factory and works councils.

(e) Industrial activity to be directed towards the satisfaction of the needs of the broad masses of the toilers. The reorganisation of the branches of industry that formerly served the needs of the ruling class (luxury trades, etc.). The strengthening of the branches of industry that will facilitate the development of agriculture, with the object of strengthening the ties between industry and peasant economy of facilitating the development of State farms, and of accelerating the rate of development of national economy as a whole.

**(B) AGRICULTURE**

(a) The confiscation and proletarian nationalisation of all large landed estates in town and country (private, church, monastery and other lands) and the transference of State and municipal landed property, including forests, minerals, lakes,

rivers, etc., to the Soviets with subsequent nationalisation of the whole of the land.

(b) The confiscation of all property utilised in production belonging to large landed estates, such as, buildings, machinery, etc., cattle, enterprises for the manufacture of agricultural products (large flour mills, cheese plants, dairy farms, fruit and vegetable drying plants, etc.).

(c) The transfer of large estates, particularly model estates and those of considerable economic importance, to the management of the organs of the proletarian dictatorship and of the Soviet farm organisations.

(d) Part of the land confiscated from the landlords and others, particularly where the land was cultivated by the peasants on a tenant basis and served as a means of holding the peasantry in economic bondage, to be transferred to the use of the peasantry (to the poor and partly also to the middle strata of the peasantry). The amount of land to be so transferred to be determined by economic expediency as well as by the degree of necessity to neutralise the peasantry and to win them over to the side of the proletariat; this amount must necessarily vary according to the different circumstances.

(e) Prohibition of buying and selling of land, as a means of preserving the land for the peasantry and preventing its passing into the hands of capitalists, land speculators, etc. Offenders against this law to be severely prosecuted.

(f) To combat usury. All transactions entailing terms of bondage to be annulled. All debts of the exploited strata of the peasantry to be annulled. The poorest stratum of the peasantry to be relieved from taxation, etc.

(g) Comprehensive State measures for developing the productive forces of agriculture; the development of rural electrification; the manufacture of tractors; the production of artificial fertilisers; the production of pure quality seeds and the raising of thoroughbred stock on Soviet farms; the extensive organisation of agricultural credits for land reclamation, etc.

(h) Financial and other support for agricultural co-operation and for all forms of collective production in the rural



districts (co-operative societies, communes, etc.). Systematic propaganda in favour of peasant co-operation (selling, credit and supply co-operative societies) to be based on the mass activity of the peasants themselves; propaganda in favour of the transition to large-scale agricultural production which—owing to the undoubted technical and economic advantages of large-scale production—provides the greatest immediate economic gain and also a method of transition to socialism most accessible to the broad masses of the toiling peasants.

### (C) TRADE AND CREDIT

(a) The proletarian nationalisation of private banks (the entire gold reserves, all securities, deposits, etc. to be transferred to the proletarian State); the proletarian State to take over State, municipal, etc. banks.

(b) The centralisation of banking; all nationalised big banks to be subordinated to the central State bank

(c) The nationalisation of wholesale trade and large retail trading enterprises (warehouses, elevators, stores, stocks of goods, etc.), and their transfer to the organs of the Soviet State.

(d) Every encouragement to be given to consumers' co-operatives as representing an integral part of the distributing apparatus, while preserving uniformity in their system of work and securing the active participation of the masses themselves in their work.

(e) The monopoly of foreign trade.

(f) The repudiation of State debts to foreign and home capitalists.

### (D) CONDITIONS OF LIFE, LABOUR, ETC

(a) Reduction of the working day to seven hours, and to six hours in industries particularly harmful to the health of the workers. Further reduction of the working day and transition to a five-day week in countries with developed productive forces. The regulation of the working day to correspond to the increase of the productivity of labour.

(b) Prohibition, as a rule, of night work and employment in

harmful trades for all females. Prohibition of child labour  
Prohibition of overtime.

(c) Special reduction of the working day for the youth (a maximum six-hour day for young persons up to 18 years of age). Socialist reorganisation of the labour of young persons so as to combine employment in industry with general and political education.

(d) Social insurance in all forms (sickness, old age, accident, unemployment, etc.), at State expense (and at the expense of the owners of private enterprises where they still exist), insurance affairs to be managed by the insured themselves.

(e) Comprehensive measures of hygiene; the organisation of free medical service. To combat social diseases (alcoholism, venereal diseases, tuberculosis).

(f) Complete equality between men and women before the law and in social life; a radical reform of marriage and family laws; recognition of maternity as a social function; protection of mothers and infants. Initiation of social care and upbringing of infants and children (creches, kindergartens, children's homes, etc.). The establishment of institutions that will gradually relieve the burden of house drudgery (public kitchens and laundries), and systematic cultural struggle against the ideology and traditions of female bondage.

#### (E) HOUSING

(a) The confiscation of big house property.

(b) The transfer of confiscated houses to the administration of the local Soviets.

(c) Workers to be removed to bourgeois residential districts.

(d) Palaces and large private and public buildings to be placed at the disposal of labour organisations.

(e) The carrying out of an extensive programme of house construction.

#### (F) NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS

(a) The recognition of the right of all nations, irrespective of race, to complete self-determination, that is, self-determination inclusive of the right to State separation.

(b) The voluntary unification and centralisation of the military and economic forces of all nations liberated from capitalism for the purpose of fighting against imperialism and for building up socialist economy.

(c) Wide and determined struggle against the imposition of any kind of limitation and restriction upon any nationality, nation or race. Complete equality for all nations and races.

(d) The Soviet State to guarantee and support with all the resources at its command the national cultures of nations liberated from capitalism, at the same time to carry out a consistent proletarian policy directed towards the development of the content of such cultures.

(e) Every assistance to be rendered to the economic, political and cultural growth of the formerly oppressed "territories", "dominions" and "colonies," with the object of transferring them to socialist lines, so that a durable basis may be laid for complete national equality.

(f) To combat all remnants of chauvinism, national hatred, race prejudices and other ideological products of feudal and capitalist barbarism.

#### **(G) MEANS OF IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCE**

(a) The nationalisation of printing plants.

(b) The monopoly of newspapers and book-publishing.

(c) The nationalisation of big cinema enterprises, theatres, etc.

(d) The utilisation of the nationalised means of "intellectual production" for the most extensive political and general education of the toilers and for the building up of a new socialist culture on a proletarian class basis.

### **4. The Basis for the Economic Policy of the Proletarian Dictatorship**

In carrying out all these tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the following postulates must be borne in mind :

(1) The complete abolition of private property in land, and the nationalisation of the land, cannot be brought about immediately in the more developed capitalist countries, where the

principle of private property is deep-rooted among a broad strata of the peasantry. In such countries, the nationalisation of all land can only be brought about gradually, by means of a series of transitional measures.

(2) Nationalisation of production should not, as a rule, be applied to small and middle-sized enterprises (Peasants, small artisans, handicrafts, small and medium shops, small manufacturers, etc.). Firstly, because the proletariat must draw a strict distinction between the property of the small commodity producer working for himself, who can and must be gradually brought into the groove of socialist construction, and the property of the capitalist exploiter, the liquidation of which is an essential condition precedent for socialist construction.

Secondly, because the proletariat, after seizing power, may not have sufficient organising forces at its disposal, particularly in the first phases of the dictatorship, for the purpose of destroying capitalism and at the same time to establish contacts with the smaller and medium individual units of production on a socialist basis. These small individual enterprises (primarily peasant enterprises) will be drawn into the general socialist organisation of production and distribution only gradually, with the powerful and systematic aid which the proletarian State will render to organise them in all the various forms of collective enterprises. Any attempt to break up their economic system violently and to compel them to adopt collective methods by force will only lead to harmful results.

(3) Owing to the prevalence of a large number of small units of production (primarily peasant farms, farmers' enterprises, small artisans, small shopkeepers, etc.) in colonies, semi-colonies and economically backward countries, where the petty-bourgeois masses represent the overwhelming majority of the population, and even in centres of capitalist world industry (the United States of America, Germany, and to some degree also England), it is necessary, in the first stage of development, to preserve to some extent the market forms of economic contacts, the money system etc. The variety of prevailing economic forms (ranging from socialist large-scale industry to small peasant and

artisan enterprises), which unavoidably come into conflict with each other; the variety of classes and class groups corresponding to this variety of economic forms, each having different stimuli for economic activity and conflicting class interests; and finally, the prevalence, in all spheres, of economic life, of habits and traditions inherited from bourgeois society, which cannot be removed all at once—all this demands that the proletariat, in exercising its economic leadership, shall properly combine, on the basis of market relationships, large-scale socialist industry with the small enterprises of the simple commodity producers, i.e., it must combine them in such a way as to guarantee the leading role to socialist industry and at the same time bring about the greatest possible development of the mass of peasant enterprises. Hence, the greater the importance of scattered, small peasant labour in the general economy of the country, the greater will be the volume of market relations, the smaller will be the significance of directly planned management, and the greater will be the degree to which the general economic plan will depend upon forecasts of uncontrollable economic relations. On the other hand, the smaller the importance of small production, the greater will be the proportion of socialised labour, the more powerful will be the concentrated and socialised means of production, the smaller will be the volume of market relations, the greater will be the importance of planned management as compared with uncoordinated management and the more considerable and universal will be the application of planned management in the sphere of production and distribution.

Provided the proletarian dictatorship carries out a correct class policy, i.e., provided proper account is taken of class relationships, the technical and economic superiority of large-scale socialised production, the centralisation of all the most important economic key positions (industry, transport, large-scale agricultural enterprises, banks, etc.) in the hands of the proletarian State, planned management of industry, and the power wielded by the State apparatus as a whole (the budget, taxes, administrative legislation and legislation generally), render it possible continuously and systematically to dislodge private

capital and the new outcrops of capitalism which, in the period of more or less free commercial and market relations, will emerge in town and country with the development of simple commodity production (big farmers, kulaks). At the same time, by organising peasant farming on co-operative lines, and as a result of the growth of collective forms of economy, the great bulk of the peasant enterprises will be systematically drawn into the main channel of developing socialism. The outwardly capitalist forms and methods of economic activity that are bound up with market relations (money form of accounting, payment for labour in money, buying and selling, credit and banks, etc.), serve as levers for the socialist transformation, in so far as they, to an increasing degree, serve the consistently socialist type of enterprises, i.e., the socialist section of economy.

Thus, provided the State carries out a correct policy, market relations under the proletarian dictatorship destroy themselves in the process of their own development by helping to dislodge private capital, by changing the character of peasant economy—with time the means of production become more and more centralised and concentrated in the hands of the proletarian State—they help to destroy market relations altogether.

In the event of probable capitalist military intervention, and of prolonged counter-revolutionary wars against the dictatorship of the proletariat, the necessity may arise for a war-Communist economic policy ("War Communism"), which is nothing more nor less than the organisation of rational consumption for the purpose of military defence, accompanied by a system of intensified pressure upon the capitalist groups (confiscation, requisitions, etc.), with the more or less complete liquidation of freedom of trade and market relations and a sharp disturbance of the individualist, economic stimuli of the small producers, which results in a diminution of the productive forces of the country. This policy of "War Communism," while it undermines the material basis of the strata of the population in the country that are hostile to the working class, secures a rational distribution of the available supplies and facilitates the military struggle of the proletarian dictatorship—which is the

historical justification of this policy—nevertheless, cannot be regarded as the “normal” economic policy of the proletarian dictatorship.

### **5. Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Classes**

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a continuation of the class struggle under new conditions. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a stubborn fight—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, pedagogical and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society, against external capitalist enemies, against the remnants of the exploiting classes within the country, against the upshoots of the new bourgeoisie that spring up on the basis of still prevailing commodity production.

After the civil war has been brought to an end the stubborn class struggle continues in new forms, primarily in the form of a struggle between the survivals of previous economic systems and fresh upshoots of them, on the one hand, and socialist forms of economy, on the other. The forms of the struggle undergo a change at various stages of socialist development, and in the first stages the struggle, under certain conditions, may be extremely severe.

In the initial stage of the proletarian dictatorship the policy of the proletariat towards other classes and social groups within the country is determined by the following postulates :

(1) The big bourgeoisie and the landowners, a section of the officer corps, the higher command of the forces, and the higher bureaucracy—who remain loyal to the bourgeoisie and the landlords—are consistent enemies of the working class against whom ruthless war must be waged. The organising skill of a certain section of these strata may be utilised, but as a rule, only after the dictatorship has been consolidated and all conspiracies and rebellions of exploiters have been decisively crushed.

(2) In regard to the technical intelligentsia, which was brought up in the spirit of bourgeois traditions and the higher ranks of which were closely linked up with the commanding apparatus of capital, the proletariat, while ruthlessly suppressing every

counter-revolutionary action on the part of hostile sections of the intelligentsia, must at the same time give consideration to the necessity of utilising this skilled social force for the work of socialist construction; it must give every encouragement to the groups that are neutral, and especially to those that are friendly towards the proletarian revolution. In widening the economic, technical and cultural perspectives of socialist construction to its utmost social limits, the proletariat must systematically win over the technical intelligentsia to its side, subject it to its ideological influence and secure its close co-operation in the work of social reconstruction.

(3) In regard to the peasantry, the task of the Communist Parties is, while placing its reliance in the agricultural proletariat, to win over all the exploited and toiling strata of the countryside. The victorious proletariat must draw strict distinctions between the various groups among the peasantry, weigh their relative importance, and render every support to the propertyless and semi-proletarian sections of the peasantry by transferring to them a part of the land taken from the big landowners and by helping them in their struggle against usurer's capital, etc. Moreover, the proletariat must neutralise the middle strata of the peasantry and mercilessly suppress the slightest opposition on the part of the village bourgeoisie who ally themselves with the landowners. As its dictatorship becomes consolidated and socialist construction develops, the proletariat must proceed from the policy of neutralisation to a policy of durable alliance with the masses of middle peasantry, but must not adopt the viewpoint of sharing power in any form. The dictatorship of the proletariat implies that the industrial workers alone are capable of leading the entire mass of the toilers. On the other hand, while representing the rule of a single class, the dictatorship of the proletariat at the same time represents a special form of class alliance between the proletariat, as the vanguard of the toilers, and the numerous non-proletarian sections of the toiling masses, or the majority of them. It represents an alliance for the complete overthrow of capital, for the complete suppression of the opposition of the bourgeoisie and their attempts



at restoration, an alliance aiming at the complete building up and consolidation of socialism.

(4) The petty urban bourgeoisie, which continuously waver between extreme reaction and sympathy for the proletariat, must likewise be neutralised and, as far as possible, won over to the side of the proletariat. This can be achieved by leaving to them their small property and permitting a certain measure of free trade, by releasing them from the bondage of usurious credit and by the proletariat helping them in all sorts of ways in the struggle against all and every form of capitalist oppression.

## **6. Mass Organisations in the System of Proletarian Dictatorship**

In the process of fulfilling these tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, a radical change takes place in the tasks and functions of the mass organisations, particularly of the labour organisations. Under capitalism, the mass labour organisations, in which the broad masses of the proletariat were originally organised and trained, i.e., the trade (industrial) unions, serve as the principal weapons in the struggle against trustified capital and its State. Under the proletarian dictatorship, they become transformed into the principal lever of the State; they become transformed into a school of Communism by means of which vast masses of the proletariat are drawn into the work of socialist management of production; they are transformed into organisations directly connected with all parts of the State apparatus, influencing all branches of its work, safeguarding the permanent and day-to-day interests of the working class and fighting against bureaucracy in the departments of the State. Thus, in so far as they promote from their ranks leaders in the work of construction, draw into this work of construction broad sections of the proletariat and aim at combating bureaucracy, which inevitably arises as a result of the operation of class influences alien to the proletariat and of the inadequate cultural development of the masses, the trade unions become the backbone of the proletarian economic and State organisation as a whole.

Notwithstanding reformist utopias, working-class co-operative organisations under capitalism are doomed to play a very minor role and in the general environment of the capitalist system not infrequently degenerate into mere appendages of capitalism. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, these organisations can and must become the most important units of the distributing apparatus.

Lastly, peasant agricultural co-operative organisations (selling, purchasing, credit and producing), under proper management, and provided a systematic struggle is carried on against the capitalist elements and that really broad masses of the toilers who follow the lead of the proletariat take a really active part in their work, can and must become one of the principal organisational means for linking up town and country. To the extent that they were able to maintain their existence at all under capitalism, co-operative peasant enterprises inevitably became transformed into capitalist enterprises, for they were dependent upon capitalist industry, capitalist banks and upon capitalist economic environment. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, such enterprises develop amidst a different system of relationships, depend upon proletarian industry, proletarian banks, etc. Thus, provided the proletariat carries out a proper policy, provided the class struggle is systematically conducted against the capitalist elements outside as well as inside the co-operative organisations, and provided socialist industry exercises its guidance over it, agricultural co-operation will become one of the principal levers for the socialist transformation and collectivisation of the countryside. All this, however, does not exclude the possibility that in certain countries the consumers' societies, and particularly the agricultural co-operative societies led by the bourgeoisie and their social-democratic agents will at first be hotbeds of counter-revolutionary activity and sabotage against the work of economic construction of the workers' revolution.

In the course of this militant and constructive work, carried on through the medium of these multifarious proletarian organisations— which should serve as effective levers of the

Soviet State and the link between it and the masses of all strata of the working class—the proletariat secures unity of will and action and exercises this unity through the medium of the Communist Party, which plays the leading role in the system of the proletarian dictatorship.

The Party of the proletariat relies directly on the trade unions and other organisations that embrace the masses of the workers, and through these relies on the peasantry (Soviets, co-operative societies, Young Communist League, etc.); by means of these levers it guides the whole Soviet system. The proletariat can fulfil its role as organiser of the new society only if the Soviet Government is loyally supported by all the mass organisations; only if class unity is maintained, and only under the guidance of the Party.

## **7. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Cultural Revolution**

The role of organiser of the new human society presupposes that the proletariat itself will become culturally mature, that it will transform its own nature, that it will continually promote from its ranks increasing numbers of men and women capable of mastering science, techniques and administration in order to build up socialism and a new socialist culture.

Bourgeois revolution against feudalism presupposes that a new class has arisen in the midst of feudal society that is culturally more advanced than the ruling class, and is already the dominant factor in economic life. The proletarian revolution, however, develops under other conditions. Being economically exploited, politically oppressed and culturally downtrodden under capitalism, the working class transforms its own nature only in the course of the transition period, only after it has conquered State power, only by destroying the bourgeois monopoly of education and mastering all the sciences, and only after it has gained experience in the great work of construction. The mass awakening of Communist consciousness, the cause of socialism itself, calls for a mass change of human nature, which can be achieved only in the

course of the practical movement, in revolution. Hence, revolution is not only necessary because there is no other way of overthrowing the ruling class, but also because only in the process of revolution is the overthrowing class able to purge itself of the dross of the old society and become capable of creating a new society.

In destroying the capitalist monopoly of the means of production, the working class must also destroy the capitalist monopoly of education, that is, it must take possession of all the schools, from the elementary schools to the universities. It is particularly important for the proletariat to train members of the working class as experts in the sphere of production (engineers, technicians, organisers, etc.), as well as in the sphere of military affairs, science, art, etc. Parallel with this work stands the task of raising the general cultural level of the proletarian masses, of improving their political education, of raising their general standard of knowledge and technical skill, of training them in the methods of public work and administration, and of combating the survivals of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois prejudices, etc.

Only to the extent that the proletariat promotes from its own ranks a body of men and women capable of occupying the key positions of socialist construction, only to the extent that this body grows, and draws increasing numbers of the working class into the process of revolutionary-cultural transformation and gradually obliterates the line that divides the proletariat into an "advanced" and a "backward" section will the guarantees be created for successful socialist construction and against bureaucratic decay and class degeneracy.

However, in the process of revolution the proletariat not only changes its own nature, but also the nature of other classes, primarily the numerous petty-bourgeois strata in town and country and especially the toiling sections of the peasantry. By drawing the wide masses into the process of cultural revolution and socialist construction, by uniting and Communistically educating them with all the means at its disposal,

by strongly combating all anti-proletarian and narrow craft ideologies, and by persistently and systematically overcoming the general and cultural backwardness of the rural districts, the working class, on the basis of the developing collective forms of economy, prepares the way for the complete removal of class divisions in society.

One of the most important tasks of the cultural revolution affecting the wide masses is the task of systematically and unswervingly combating religion—the opium of the people. The proletarian government must withdraw all State support from the church, which is the agency of the former ruling class; it must prevent all church interference in State-organised educational affairs, and ruthlessly suppress the counter-revolutionary activity of the ecclesiastical organisations. At the same time, the proletarian State while granting liberty of worship and abolishing the privileged position of the formerly dominant religion, carries on anti-religious propaganda with all the means at its command and reconstructs the whole of its educational work on the basis of scientific materialism.

## **8. The Struggle for the World Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Principal Types of Revolution**

The international proletarian revolution represents a combination of processes which vary in time and character: purely proletarian revolutions; revolutions of a bourgeois-democratic type which grow into proletarian revolution; wars for national liberation; colonial revolutions. The world dictatorship of the proletariat comes only as the final result of the revolutionary process.

The uneven development of capitalism, which became more accentuated in the period of imperialism, has given rise to a variety of types of capitalism, to different stages of ripeness of capitalism in different countries, and to a variety of specific conditions of the revolutionary process. These circumstances make it historically inevitable that the proletariat will come to power by a multiplicity of ways and

degrees of rapidity; that a number of countries must pass through certain transitional stages leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat and must adopt varied forms of socialist construction.

The variety of conditions and ways by which the proletariat will achieve its dictatorship in the various countries may be divided schematically into three main types.

Countries of highly developed capitalism (United States of America, Germany, Great Britain, etc.), having powerful productive forces, highly centralised production, with small-scale production reduced to relative insignificance, and a long established bourgeois democratic political system. In such countries the fundamental political demand of the programme is direct transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the economic sphere, the most characteristic demands are: expropriation of the whole of the large-scale industry; organisation of a large number of State Soviet farms and, in contrast to this, a relatively small portion of the land to be transferred to the peasantry; unregulated market relations to be given comparatively small scope; rapid rate of socialist development generally, and of collectivisation of peasant farming in particular.

Countries with a medium development of capitalism (Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, the Balkan countries, etc.), having numerous survivals of semi-feudal relationships in agriculture, possessing, to a certain extent, the material pre-requisites for socialist construction, and in which the bourgeois-democratic reforms have not yet been completed. In some of these countries a process of more or less rapid development from bourgeois-democratic revolution to socialist revolution is possible. In others, there may be types of proletarian revolution which will have a large number of bourgeois-democratic tasks to fulfil. Hence, in these countries the dictatorship of the proletariat may not come about at once, but in the process of transition from the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat; where the

révolution develops directly as a proletarian revolution it is presumed that the proletariat exercises leadership over a broad agrarian peasant movement. In general, the agrarian revolution plays a most important part in these countries, and in some cases a decisive role; in the process of expropriating large landed property a considerable portion of the confiscated land is placed at the disposal of the peasantry; the volume of market relations prevailing after the victory of the proletariat is considerable; the task of organising the peasantry along co-operative lines and, later, of combining them in production occupies an important place among the tasks of socialist construction. The rate of this construction is relatively slow.

Colonial and semi-colonial countries (China, India, etc.) and dependent countries (Argentina, Brazil, etc.), having the rudiments of, and in some cases considerably developed industry, but in the majority of cases inadequate for independent socialist construction; with feudal medieval relationships, or "Asiatic mode of production" relationships prevailing in their economies and in their political superstructures; and in which the principal industrial, commercial and banking enterprises, the principal means of transport, the large landed estates (latifundia), plantations, etc. are concentrated in the hands of foreign imperialist groups. The principal task in such countries is, on the one hand, to fight against feudalism and pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and to systematically develop the peasant agrarian revolution; on the other hand, to fight against foreign imperialism for national independence. As a rule, transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries will be possible only through a series of preparatory stages, as the outcome of a whole period of transformation of bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution, while in the majority of cases, successful socialist construction will be possible only if direct support is obtained from the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established.

In still more backward countries (as in some parts of Africa) where there are no wage workers or very few, where the majority of the population still lives in tribal conditions, where survivals of primitive tribal forms still exist, where the national bourgeoisie is almost non-existent, where the primary role of foreign imperialism is that of military occupation and usurpation of land, the central task is to fight for national independence. Victorious national uprisings in these countries may open the way for their direct development towards socialism and their avoiding the stage of capitalism, provided real, powerful assistance is rendered to them by the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established.

Thus, in the epoch in which the proletariat in the most developed capitalist countries is confronted with the immediate task of capturing power, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is already established in the U.S.S.R. and is a factor of world significance, the movement for liberation in colonial and semi-colonial countries, which was brought into being by the penetration of world capitalism, may lead to socialist development—*notwithstanding the immaturity of social relationships in these countries taken by themselves*—provided they receive the assistance and support of the proletarian dictatorship and of the international proletarian movement generally.

## **9. Struggle for the World Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Colonial Revolution**

The special conditions of the revolutionary struggle prevailing in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the inevitably long period of struggle required for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry and for the transformation of this dictatorship into the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, finally, the decisive importance of the national aspects of the struggle impose upon the Communist Parties of these countries a number of special tasks, which are preparatory stages to the general tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Com-



munist International considers the following to be the most important of these special tasks :

(1) To overthrow the rule of foreign imperialism, of the feudal rulers and of the landlord bureaucracy.

(2) To establish the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry on a Soviet basis.

(3) Complete national independence and national unification.

(4) Annulment of State debts.

(5) Nationalisation of large-scale enterprises (industrial, transport, banking and others) owned by the imperialists.

(6) The confiscation of landlord, church and monastery lands. The nationalisation of all the land.

(7) Introduction of the 8-hour day.

(8) The organisation of revolutionary workers' and peasants' armies.

In the colonies and semi-colonies where the proletariat is the leader of, and commands hegemony in, the struggle, the consistent bourgeois-democratic revolution will grow into proletarian revolution—in proportion as the struggle develops and becomes more intense (sabotage by the bourgeoisie, confiscation of the enterprises belonging to the sabotaging section of the bourgeoisie, which inevitably extends to the nationalisation of the whole of large-scale industry). In the colonies where there is no proletariat, the overthrow of the domination of the imperialists implies the establishment of the rule of people's (peasant) Soviets, the confiscation and transfer to the State of foreign enterprises and lands.

Colonial revolutions and movements for national liberation play an extremely important part in the struggle against imperialism, and in the struggle for the conquest of power by the working class. Colonies and semi-colonies are also important in the transition period because they represent the *world rural district* in relation to the industrial countries, which represent the *world city*. Consequently the problem of organising socialist world economy, of properly

combining industry with agriculture, is, to a large extent, the problem of the relation towards the former colonies of imperialism. Hence, the establishment of a fraternal, militant alliance with the masses of the toilers in the colonies represents one of the principal tasks the world industrial proletariat must fulfil as leader in the struggle against imperialism.

Thus, in rousing the workers in the home countries for the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the progress of the world revolution also rouses hundreds of millions of colonial workers and peasants for the struggle against foreign imperialism. In view of the existence of centres of socialism represented by Soviet Republics of growing economic power, the colonies which break away from imperialism economically gravitate towards, and gradually combine with, the industrial centres of world socialism, are drawn into the channel of socialist construction, and by skipping the further stage of development of capitalism, as the predominant system, obtain opportunities for rapid economic and cultural progress. The Peasants' Soviets in the backward ex-colonies and the Workers' and Peasants' Soviets in the more developed ex-colonies group themselves politically around the centres of proletarian dictatorship, join the growing Federation of Soviet Republics, and thus enter the general system of the world proletarian dictatorship.

Socialism, as the new method of production, thus obtains world-wide scope of development.

## **V. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the U.S.S.R. and the International Social Revolution**

### **1. The Building Up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the Class Struggle**

The principal manifestation of the profound crisis of the capitalist system is the division of world economy into capitalist countries, on the one hand, and countries building up socialism, on the other. Therefore, the internal

consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R., the success achieved in the work of socialist construction, the growth of the influence and authority of the U.S.S.R. among the masses of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the colonies signify, therefore, the continuation, intensification and expansion of the international social revolution.

Possessing in the country the necessary and sufficient material pre-requisites not only for the overthrow of the landlord and the bourgeoisie, but also for the establishment of complete socialism, the workers of the Soviet Republics, with the aid of the international proletariat, heroically repelled the attacks of the armed forces of the internal and foreign counter-revolution, consolidated their alliance with the bulk of the peasantry and achieved considerable success in the sphere of socialist construction.

The contacts established between proletarian socialist industry and small peasant economy, which stimulates the growth of the productive forces of agriculture, and at the same time assures the leading role to socialist industry; the linking up of industry with agriculture in place of capitalist production for the satisfaction of the unproductive consumption of parasitic classes that was the system formerly; production, not for capitalist profit, but for the satisfaction of the growing needs of the masses of the consumers; the growth of the needs of the masses, which in the final analysis greatly stimulates the entire productive process; and, finally, the close concentration of the economic key positions under the command of the proletarian State, the growth of planned management and the more economic and expedient distribution of the means of production that goes with it—all these enable the proletariat to make rapid progress along the road of socialist construction.

In raising the level of the productive forces of the whole economy of the country, and in steering a straight course for the industrialisation of the U.S.S.R.—the rapidity of which is dictated by the international and internal situation—the

proletariat in the U.S.S.R., notwithstanding the systematic attempts on the part of the capitalist Powers to organise an economic and financial boycott against the Soviet Republics, at the same time increases the relative share of the socialised (socialist) section of national economy in the total means of production in the country, in the total output of industry and in the total trade turnover.

Thus, with the land nationalised, by means of the levers of State trade and rapidly growing co-operation, and with the increasing industrialisation of the country, State socialist industry, transport and banking are more and more guiding the activities of the small and very small peasant enterprises.

In the sphere of agriculture, especially, the level of the forces of production is being raised amidst conditions that restrict the process of differentiation among the peasantry (nationalisation of the land, and consequently the prohibition of the sale and purchase of land; sharply graded progressive taxation; the financing of poor and middle peasants' co-operative societies and producers' organisations; laws regulating the hiring of labour; depriving the kulaks of certain political and public rights; organising the rural poor in separate organisations, etc.). However, insofar as the productive forces of socialist industry have not yet grown sufficiently to enable a broad, new technical base to be laid for agriculture, and, consequently, to render possible the immediate and rapid unification of peasant enterprises into large public enterprises (collective farms), the kulak class tends to grow and establish, first economic and then political, contacts with the elements of the so-called "new bourgeoisie."

Being in command of the principal economic key positions in the country, and systematically squeezing out the remnants of urban and private capital, which has greatly dwindled in the last few years of the "New Economic Policy," restricting in every way the exploiting strata in the rural districts that arise out of the development of commodity and money relationships; supporting existing Soviet farms in the rural districts and establishing new ones; drawing the bulk of the

peasant simple commodity producers, through the medium of rapidly growing co-operative organisations, into the general system of Soviet economic organisations, and, consequently, into the work of socialist construction, which, in the conditions prevailing under the proletarian dictatorship and with the economic leadership of socialist industry, is identical with the development of socialism; passing from the process of restoration to the process of expanded reproduction of the entire productive and technical base of the country—the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. sets itself, and is already beginning to fulfil, the task of large-scale capital construction (production of the means of production generally, development of heavy industry, and especially of electrification), and developing still further selling, buying and credit co-operation, sets itself the task of organising the peasantry in producing co-operatives on a mass scale and on a collectivist basis, which calls for the powerful material assistance of the proletarian State.

Thus, being already a decisive economic force determining, in the main, the entire economic development of the U.S.S.R., socialism by that very fact makes still further strides in its development and systematically overcomes the difficulties that arise from the petty-bourgeois character of the country and the periods of temporarily acute class antagonism.

The task of re-equipping industry and the need for large investments in capital construction unavoidably give rise to serious difficulties in the path of socialist development which, in the last analysis, are to be attributed to the technical and economic backwardness of the country and to the ruin caused in the years of the imperialist and civil wars. Notwithstanding this, however, the standard of living of the working class and of the broad masses of the toilers is steadily rising and, simultaneously with the socialist rationalisation and scientific organisation of industry, the 7-hour day is gradually being introduced, which opens up still wider prospects for the improvement of the conditions of life and labour of the working class.

Standing on the basis of the economic growth of the U.S.S.R. and on the steady increase in the relative importance of the socialist section of industry; never for a moment halting in the struggle against the kulaks; relying upon the rural poor and maintaining a firm alliance with the bulk of the middle peasantry—the working class, united and led by the Communist Party, which has been hardened in revolutionary battles, draws increasing masses, scores of millions of toilers into the work of socialist construction. The principal means employed towards this aim are: the development of broad mass organisations (the Party, as the guiding force; the trade unions, as the backbone of the entire system of the proletarian dictatorship; the Young Communist League; co-operative societies of all types; working womens' and peasant womens' organisations; the various so-called "voluntary societies;" worker and peasant correspondents' societies; sport, scientific, cultural and educational organisations); full encouragement of the initiative of the masses and the promotion of fresh strata of workers to high posts in all spheres of industry and administration. The steady attraction of the masses into the process of socialist construction, the constant renovation of the entire State, economic, trade union and Party apparatus with men and women fresh from the ranks of the proletariat, the systematic training in the higher educational establishments and at special courses of workers, generally, and young workers, in particular, as new socialist experts in all branches of construction—all these together serve as one of the principal guarantees against the bureaucratic ossification of social degeneration of the stratum of the proletariat directly engaged in administration.

## **2. The Significance of the U.S.S.R. and Her World Revolutionary Duties**

Having defeated Russian imperialism and liberated all the former colonies and oppressed nations of the Tsarist Empire, and systematically laying a firm foundation for their cultural and political, development by industrialising their territories:

having guaranteed the juridical position of the Autonomous Territories, Autonomous Republics and Allied Republics in the Constitution of the Union and having granted in full the right of nations to self-determination—the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. by this guarantees, not only formal, but also real equality for the different nationalities in the Union.

Being the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of socialist construction, the land of great working class achievements, of the union of the workers with the peasants and of a new culture marching under the banner of Marxism—the U.S.S.R. inevitably becomes the base of the world movement of all oppressed classes, the centre of international revolution, the greatest factor in world history. In the U.S.S.R., the world proletariat for the first time acquires a country that is really its own, and for the colonial movements the U.S.S.R. becomes a powerful center of attraction.

Thus, the U.S.S.R. is an extremely important factor in the general crisis of capitalism, not only because she has dropped out of the world capitalist system and has created a basis for a new socialist system of production, but also because she plays an exceptionally great revolutionary role generally; she is the international driving force of proletarian revolution that impels the proletariat of all countries to seize power; she is the living example proving that the working class is not only capable of destroying capitalism, but of building up socialism as well; she is the prototype of the fraternity of nationalities in all lands united in the World Union of Socialist Republics and of the economic unity of the toilers of all countries in a single world socialist economic system that the world proletariat must establish when it has captured political power.

The simultaneous existence of two economic systems, the socialist system in the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist system in other countries, imposes on the Proletarian State the task of warding off the blows showered upon it by the capitalist world (boycott, blockade, etc.), and also compels it to resort

to economic manoeuvring and the utilisation of economic contacts with capitalist countries (with the aid of the monopoly of foreign trade—which is one of the fundamental conditions for the successful building up of socialism, and also with the aid of credits, loans, concessions, etc.). The principal and fundamental line to be followed in this connection must be the line of establishing the widest possible contacts with foreign countries—within limits determined by their usefulness to the U.S.S.R., i.e., primarily for strengthening industry in the U.S.S.R., for laying the base for her own heavy industry and electrification, and finally, for the development of her own socialist engineering industry. Only to the extent that the economic independence of the U.S.S.R. in the capitalist environment is secured can solid guarantees be obtained against the danger that socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. may be destroyed and that the U.S.S.R. may be transformed into an appendage of the world capitalist system.

On the other hand, notwithstanding their interest in the markets of the U.S.S.R., the capitalist States continually vacillate between their commercial interests and their fear of the growth of the U.S.S.R., which means the growth of international revolution. However, the principal and fundamental tendency in the policy of imperialist powers is to encircle the U.S.S.R. and conduct counter-revolutionary war against her in order to strangle her and to establish a world bourgeois terrorist regime.

The systematic imperialist attempts politically to encircle the U.S.S.R. and the growing danger of an armed attack upon her, do not, however, prevent the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—a section of the Communist International and the leader of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R.—from fulfilling its international obligations and from rendering support to all the oppressed, to the labour movements in capitalist countries, to colonial movements against imperialism and to the struggle against national oppression in every form.



### **3. The Duties of the International Proletariat to the U.S.S.R.**

In view of the fact that the U.S.S.R. is the only fatherland of the international proletariat, the principal bulwark of its achievements and the most important factor for its international emancipation, the international proletariat must on its part facilitate the success of the work of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., and defend her against the attacks of the capitalist Powers by all the means in its power.

“The world political situation has made the dictatorship of the proletariat an immediate issue, and all the events of world politics are inevitably concentrating around one central point, namely, the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, which must inevitably group around itself the Soviet movements of the advanced workers of all countries on the one hand, and all the national liberation movements of the colonial and oppressed nationalities on the other.”—(Lenin.)

In the event of the imperialist States declaring war upon and attacking the U.S.S.R., the international proletariat must retaliate by organising bold and determined mass action and struggle for the overthrow of the imperialist governments with the slogan of : dictatorship of the proletariat and alliance with the U.S.S.R.

In the colonies, and particularly the colonies of the imperialist country attacking the U.S.S.R., every effort must be made to take advantage of the diversion of the imperialist military forces to develop an anti-imperialist struggle and to organise revolutionary action for the purpose of throwing off the yoke of imperialism and of winning complete independence.

The development of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the growth of its international influence not only rouse the hatred of the capitalist States and their social-democratic agents against her, but also inspires the toilers all over the world with sympathy towards her, and stimulate the readiness of the oppressed classes of all countries to fight with all the means

in their power for the land of the proletarian dictatorship, in the event of an imperialist attack upon her.

Thus the development of the contradictions within modern world economy, the development of the general capitalist crisis, and the imperialist military attack upon the Soviet Union inevitably lead to a mighty revolutionary outbreak which must overwhelm capitalism in a number of the so-called civilised countries, unleash the victorious revolution in the colonies, broaden the base of the proletarian dictatorship to an enormous degree, and thus, with tremendous strides bring nearer the final world victory of socialism.

## **VI. The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

### **1. Ideologies Among the Working Class Inimical to Communism**

In its fight against capitalism for the dictatorship of the proletariat, revolutionary Communism encounters numerous tendencies among the working class, which to a more or less degree express the ideological subordination of the proletariat to the imperialist bourgeoisie, or reflect the ideological influence exercised upon the proletariat by the petty bourgeoisie, which at times rebels against the shackles of finance capital, but is incapable of adopting sustained and scientifically planned strategy and tactics or of carrying on the struggle in an organised manner on the basis of the stern discipline that is characteristic of the proletariat.

The mighty social power of the imperialist State, with its auxiliary apparatus, schools, press, theatre and church—is primarily reflected in the existence of religious and reformist tendencies among the working class, which represent the main obstacles on the road towards the proletarian social revolution.

The confessional, religiously tinged tendency among the working class finds expression in the confessional trade unions, which frequently are directly connected with

corresponding bourgeois political organisations, and are affiliated to one or other of the church organisations of the dominant class (Catholic trade unions, Young Men's Christian Association, Jewish Zionist organisations, etc.). All these tendencies, being the most striking product of the ideological captivity of certain strata of the proletariat, in most cases, bear a romantic feudal tinge. By sanctifying all the abominations of the capitalist regime with the holy water of religion, and by terrorising their flock with the spectre of punishment in the world to come, the leaders of these organisations serve as the most reactionary units of the class enemy in the camp of the proletariat.

A cynically commercial, and imperialist secular form of subjecting the proletariat to the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie is represented by contemporary "socialist" reformism. Taking its main gospel from the tablets of imperialist politics, its model to-day is the deliberately anti-socialist and openly counter-revolutionary "American Federation of Labour". The ideological dictatorship of the servile American trade union bureaucracy, which in its turn expresses the ideological dictatorship of the American dollar, has become, through the medium of British reformism and His Majesty's Socialists of the British Labour Party, the most important constituent in the theory and practice of international social-democracy and of the leaders of the Amsterdam International, while the leaders of German and Austrian social-democracy embellish these theories with Marxian phraseology in order to cover up their utter betrayal of Marxism. "Socialist" reformism, the principal enemy of revolutionary Communism in the labour movement, which has a broad organisational base in the social-democratic parties and through these in the reformist trade unions, in its entire policy and theoretical outlook stands out as a force directed against the proletarian revolution.

In the sphere of foreign politics, the social-democratic parties actively supported the imperialist war on the pretext of "defending the fatherland." Imperialist expansion and

“colonial policy” received their wholehearted support. Orientation towards the counter-revolutionary “Holy Alliance” of imperialist Powers (“The League of Nations”), advocacy of ultra-imperialism, mobilisation of the masses under pseudo-pacifist slogans, and at the same time, active support of imperialism in its attacks upon the U.S.S.R. and in the impending war against the U.S.S.R.—are the main features of reformist foreign policy.

In the sphere of home politics, social-democracy has set itself the task of directly co-operating with and supporting the capitalist regime. Complete support for capitalist rationalisation and stabilisation, class peace, “peace in industry;” the policy of converting the labour organisations into organisations of the employers and of the predatory imperialist State; the practice of so-called “Industrial democracy” which in fact means complete subordination to trustified capital; adoration of the imperialist State and particularly of its false democratic labels; active participation in the building up of the organs of the imperialist State—police, army, gendarmerie, its class judiciary; the defence of the State against the encroachments of the revolutionary Communist proletariat and the executioner’s role played in time of revolutionary crisis—such is the line of social-democratic reformist home policy. While pretending to conduct the industrial struggle, reformism considers its function in this field to be to conduct that struggle in such a manner as to guard the capitalist class against any kind of shock, or, at all events, to preserve the complete inviolability of the foundations of capitalist property.

In the sphere of theory, social-democracy has utterly and completely betrayed Marxism, having traversed the road from revisionism to complete liberal-bourgeois reformism and avowed social-imperialism: it has substituted in place of the Marxian theory of the contradictions of capitalism the bourgeois theory of its harmonious development; it has pigeon-held the theory of crisis and of the pauperisation of the proletariat; it has turned the flaming and menacing

theory of class struggle into prosaic advocacy of class peace; it has exchanged the theory of growing class antagonisms for the petty-bourgeois fairy-tale about the "democratisation" of capital; in place of the theory of the inevitability of war under capitalism it has substituted the bourgeois deceit of pacifism and the lying propaganda of "ultra-imperialism;" it has exchanged the theory of the revolutionary downfall of capitalism for the counterfeit coinage of "sound" capitalism transforming itself peacefully into socialism; it has replaced revolution by evolution, the destruction of the bourgeois State by its active upbuilding, the theory of proletarian dictatorship by the theory of coalition with the bourgeoisie, the doctrine of international proletarian solidarity by preaching defence of the imperialist fatherland; for Marxian dialectical materialism it has substituted the idealist philosophy and is now engaged in picking up the crumbs of religion that fall from the table of the bourgeoisie.

Within social-democratic reformism a number of tendencies stand out that are characteristic of the bourgeois degeneracy of social-democracy.

*Constructive Socialism* (MacDonald and Co.), which by its very name suggests the struggle against the revolutionary proletariat and a favourable attitude towards the capitalist system, continues the liberal philanthropic, anti-revolutionary and bourgeois traditions of Fabianism (Beatrice and Sydney Webb, Bernard Shaw, Lord Olivier, etc.). While repudiating the dictatorship of the proletariat and the use of violence in the struggle against the bourgeoisie as a matter of principle, it favours violence in the struggle against the proletariat and the colonial peoples. While acting as the apologist of the capitalist State and preaching State capitalism under the guise of socialism, and in conjunction with the most vulgar ideologists of imperialism in both hemispheres—declaring the theory of the class struggle to be a "pre-scientific" theory—Constructive Socialism ostensibly advocates a moderate programme of nationalisation with compensation, taxation of land values, death duties, and taxation of surplus profits as

a means of abolishing capitalism. Being resolutely opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., Constructive Socialism, in complete alliance with the bourgeoisie, is an active enemy of the Communist proletarian movement and of colonial revolutions.

A special variety of Constructive Socialism is *Co-operativism or Co-operative Socialism* (Charles Gide and Co.), which also strongly repudiates the class struggle and advocates the co-operative organisation of consumers as a means of overcoming capitalism, but which, in fact, does all it can to help the stabilisation of capitalism. Having at its command an extensive propagandist apparatus, in the shape of the mass consumer's co-operative organisations, which it employs for the purpose of systematically influencing the masses, Co-operativism carries on a fierce struggle against the revolutionary labour movement, hampers it in the achievement of its aims, and represents to-day one of the most potent factors in the camp of the reformist counter-revolution.

So-called *Guild Socialism* (Penty, Orage, Hobson and others) is an eclectic attempt to unite "revolutionary" syndicalism with bourgeois Liberal Fabianism, anarchist decentralisation ("national industrial guilds") with State capitalist centralisation and mediaeval guild and craft narrowness with modern capitalism. Starting out with the ostensible demand for the abolition of the "wage system" as an "immoral" institution which must be abolished by means of workers' control of industry. Guild Socialism completely ignores the most important question, viz., the question of power. While striving to unite workers, intellectuals and technicians into a federation of national industrial 'guilds,' and to convert these guilds by peaceful means ("control from within") into organs for the administration of industry within the framework of the bourgeois State, obscures its class, imperialist and anti-proletarian character and allots to it the function of the non-class representative of the interests of the "consumers" as against the guild-organised "producers." By its advocacy of

“functional democracy,” i.e., representation of classes in capitalist society—each class being presumed to have definite social and productive function—Guild Socialism paves the way for the fascist “corporate State.” By repudiating both parliamentarism and “direct action,” the majority of the Guild Socialists doom the working class to inaction and passive subordination to the bourgeoisie. Thus Guild Socialism represents a peculiar form of trade unionist utopian opportunism, and as such cannot but play an anti-revolutionary role.

Lastly, *Austro-Marxism* represents a special variety of social-democratic reformism. Being a part of the “left-wing” of social-democracy, Austro-Marxism represents a most subtle deception of the masses of the toilers. Prostituting the terminology of Marxism, while divorcing itself entirely from the principles of revolutionary Marxism (the Kantism, Machism, etc., of the Austro-Marxists in the domain of philosophy), toying with religion, borrowing the theory of “functional democracy” from the British reformists, agreeing with the principle of “building up the republic,” i.e., building up the bourgeois State, Austro-Marxism recommends “class co-operation” in periods of so-called “equilibrium of class forces,” i.e., precisely at the time when the revolutionary crisis is maturing. This theory is a justification of coalition with the bourgeoisie for the overthrow of the proletarian revolution under the guise of defending “democracy” against the attacks of reaction. Objectively, and in practice, the violence which Austro-Marxism admits in cases of reactionary attacks is converted into reactionary violence against the proletarian revolution. Hence the “functional role” of Austro-Marxism is to deceive the workers already marching towards Communism, and therefore it is the most dangerous enemy of the proletariat, more dangerous than the avowed adherents of predatory social-imperialism.

All the above-mentioned tendencies, being constituent parts of “socialist” reformism, are agencies of the imperialist bourgeoisie within the working class itself. But Communism has to contend also against a number of petty-bourgeois

tendencies, which reflect and express the vacillation of the unstable strata of society (the urban petty bourgeoisie, the degenerate city middle class, the *lumpen-proletariat*, the declassed Bohemian intellectuals, the pauperised artisans, certain strata of the peasantry, etc.). These tendencies, which are distinguished for their extreme political instability, often cover up a right-wing policy with left-wing phraseology or drop into adventurism, substitute noisy political gesticulation for objective estimation of forces, and often tumble from astounding heights of revolutionary bombast to profound depths of pessimism and downright capitulation before the enemy. Under certain conditions, particularly in periods of sharp changes in the political situation and of forced temporary retreat, these tendencies may become very dangerous disrupters of the proletarian ranks and, consequently, a drag upon the revolutionary proletarian movement.

*Anarchism*, the most prominent representatives of which (Kropotkin, Jean Graves and others) treacherously went over to the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the war of 1914-1918, denies the necessity for wide, centralised and disciplined proletarian organisations and thus leaves the proletarian powerless before the powerful organisations of capital. By its advocacy of individual terror, it distracts the proletariat from the methods of mass organisation and mass struggle. By repudiating the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of "abstract" liberty, Anarchism deprives the proletariat of its most important and sharpest weapon against the bourgeoisie, its armies and all its organs of repression. Being remote from mass movements of any kind in the most important centres of proletarian struggle, Anarchism is steadily being reduced to a sect which, by its tactics and actions, including its opposition to the dictatorship of the working class in the U.S.S.R., has objectively joined the united front of the anti-revolutionary forces.

"*Revolutionary*" *Syndicalism*, many ideologists of which in the extremely critical war period went over to the camp of the fascist type of anti-parliamentary counter-revolutionaries,



or became peaceful reformists of the social-democratic type, by its repudiation of political struggle (particularly of revolutionary parliamentarism) and of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, by its advocacy of craft decentralisation of the labour movement generally and of the trade union movement in particular, by its repudiation of the need for a proletarian party, and of the necessity for rebellion, and by its exaggeration of the importance of the general strike (the "fold arm tactics"), like Anarchism, hinders the revolutionisation of masses of the workers wherever it has any influence. Its attacks upon the U.S.S.R., which logically follow from its repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in general, place it in this respect on a level with social-democracy.

All these tendencies take a common stand with social-democracy, the principal enemy of the proletarian revolution, on the fundamental political issue, i.e., the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, all of them come out more or less definitely in a united front with social-democracy against the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, social-democracy, which has utterly and completely betrayed Marxism, tends to rely more and more upon the ideology of the Fabians, of the Constructive Socialists and of the Guild Socialist. These tendencies are becoming transformed into the official liberal-reformist ideology of the bourgeois "socialism" of the Second International.

In the colonial countries and among the oppressed peoples and races generally, Communism encounters the influence of peculiar tendencies in the labour movement which played a useful role in a definite phase of development, but which, in the new stage of development, are becoming transformed into a reactionary force.

Sun Yat-senism in China expressed the ideology of petty-bourgeois democratic "socialism." In the "Three Principles" (Nationalism, Democracy, Socialism), the concept "people" obscured the concept "classes;" socialism was presented, not as a specific mode of production to be carried on by a specific class, i.e., by the proletariat, but as a vague

state of social well-being, while no connection was made between the struggle against imperialism and the perspectives of the development of the class struggle. Therefore, while it played a very useful rôle in the first stage of the Chinese revolution, as a consequence of the further process of class differentiation that has taken place in the country and of the further progress of revolution, Sun-Yat-senism has now changed from being the ideological expression of the development of that revolution into fetters of its further development. The epigones of Sun Yat-senism, by emphasising and exaggerating the very features of this ideology that have become objectively reactionary, have made it the official ideology of the Kuomintang, which is now an openly counter-revolutionary force. The ideological growth of the masses of the Chinese proletariat and of the toiling peasantry must, therefore, be accompanied by determined decisive struggle against the Kuomintang deception and by opposition to the remnants of the Sun Yat-senist ideology.

Tendencies like Gandhism in India, thoroughly imbued with religious conceptions, idealise the most backward and economically most reactionary forms of social life, see the solution of the social problem not in proletarian socialism, but in a reversion to these backward forms, preach passivity and repudiate the class struggle, and in the process of the development of the revolution become transformed into an openly reactionary force. Gandhism is more and more becoming an ideology directed against mass revolution. It must be strongly combated by Communism.

Garveyism which formerly was the ideology of the masses, like Gandhism, has become a hindrance to the revolutionisation of the Negro masses; originally advocating social equality for Negroes, Garveyism subsequently developed into a peculiar form of Negro "Zionism" which, instead of fighting American imperialism, advanced the slogan: "Back to Africa"! This dangerous ideology, which bears not a single genuine democratic trait, and which toys with the aristocratic attributes of a non-existent "Negro

kingdom," must be strongly resisted, for it is not a help but a hindrance to the mass Negro struggle for liberation against American imperialism.

Standing out against all these tendencies is proletarian Communism. The sublime ideology of the international revolutionary working class, it differs from all these tendencies, and primarily from social-democracy, in that, in complete harmony with the teachings of Marx and Engels, it conducts a theoretical and practical revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in the struggle applies all forms of proletarian mass action.

## **2. The Fundamental Tasks of Communist Strategy and Tactics**

The successful struggle of the Communist International for the dictatorship of the proletariat presupposes the existence in every country of a compact Communist Party, hardened in the struggle, disciplined, centralised, and closely linked up with the masses.

*The Party* is the vanguard of the working class, and consists of the best, most class-conscious, most active and most courageous members of that class. It incorporates the whole body of experience of the proletarian struggle. Basing itself upon the revolutionary theory of Marxism and representing the general and lasting interests of the whole of the working class, the Party personifies the unity of proletarian principles, of proletarian will and of proletarian revolutionary action. It is a revolutionary organisation, bound by iron discipline and strict revolutionary rules of democratic centralism, which can be carried out owing to the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard, to its loyalty to the revolution, to its ability to maintain inseparable ties with the proletarian masses and to its correct political leadership, which is constantly verified and clarified by the experiences of the masses themselves.

In order that it may fulfil its historic mission of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Communist Party must

first of all set itself and accomplish the following fundamental strategic aim :

Extend its influence over the majority of the members of its own class, including working women and the working youth. To achieve this the Communist Party must secure predominant influence in the broad mass proletarian organisations (Soviets, trade unions, factory councils, co-operative societies, sport organisations, cultural organisations, etc.). It is particularly important for the purpose of winning over the majority of the proletariat, to capture the trade unions, which are genuine mass working-class organisations closely bound up with the everyday struggle of the working class. To work in reactionary trade unions and skilfully to capture them, to win the confidence of the broad masses of the industrially organised workers, to change and remove from their posts the reformist leaders, represent important tasks in the preparatory period.

The achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat presupposes also that the proletariat acquires leadership of wide sections of the toiling masses. To accomplish this the Communist Party must extend its influence over the masses of the urban and rural poor, over the lower strata of the intelligentsia, and over the so-called "small man," i.e., the petty-bourgeois strata generally. It is particularly important that work be carried on for the purpose of extending the Party's influence over the peasantry. The Communist Party must secure for itself the wholehearted support of that stratum of the rural population that stands closest to the proletariat, i.e., the agriculture labourers and the rural poor. To this end the agriculture labourers must be organised in separate organisations; all possible support must be given to them in their struggles against the rural bourgeoisie, and strenuous work must be carried on among the small allotment farmers and small peasants. In regard to the middle strata of the peasantry in developed capitalist countries, the Communist Parties must conduct a policy to secure their neutrality. The fulfilment of all these tasks by the proletariat—the champion

of the interests of the whole people and the leader of the broad masses in their struggle against the oppression of finance capital—is an essential condition precedent for the victorious Communist revolution.

The tasks of the Communist International connected with the revolutionary struggle in colonies, semi-colonies and dependencies are extremely important strategical tasks in the world proletarian struggle. The colonial struggle presupposes that the broad masses of the working class and of the peasantry in the colonies must be won over to the banner of the revolution; but this cannot be achieved unless the closest co-operation is maintained between the proletariat in the oppressing countries and the toiling masses in the oppressed countries.

While organising under the banner of the proletarian dictatorship the revolution against imperialism in the so-called civilised States, the Communist International supports every movement against imperialist violence in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependencies themselves (for example, Latin-America); it carries on propaganda against all forms of chauvinism and against the imperialist maltreatment of enslaved peoples and races, big and small (treatment of Negroes, "yellow labour," anti-semitism, etc.), and supports their struggles against the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations. The Communist International especially combats the chauvinism that is preached in the empire-owning countries by the imperialist bourgeoisie, as well as by its social-democratic agency, the Second International, and constantly holds up in contrast to the practices of the imperialist bourgeoisie the practice of the Soviet Union, which has established relations of fraternity and equality among the nationalities inhabiting it.

The Communist Parties in the imperialist countries must render systematic aid to the colonial revolutionary liberation movement, and to the movement of oppressed nationalities generally. The duty of rendering active support to these movements rests primarily upon the workers in the countries upon which the oppressed nations are economically,

financially or politically dependent. The Communist Parties must openly recognise the right of the colonies to separation and their right to carry on propaganda for this separation, i.e., propaganda in favour of the independence of the colonies from the imperialist State; they must recognise their right of armed defence against imperialism (i.e., the right of rebellion and revolutionary war) and advocate and give active support to this defence by all means in their power. The Communist Parties must adopt this line of policy in regard to all oppressed nations.

The Communist Parties in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must carry on a bold and consistent struggle against foreign imperialism and unfailingly conduct propaganda in favour of friendship and unity with the proletariat in the imperialist countries. They must openly advance, conduct propaganda for, and carry out the slogan of agrarian revolution, rouse the broad masses of the peasantry for the overthrow of the landlords and combat the reactionary and mediaeval influence of the priesthood, of the missionaries and other similiar elements.

In these countries, the principal task is to organise the workers and the peasantry independently (to establish class Communist Parties of the proletariat, trade unions, peasant leagues and committees and—in a revolutionary situation—Soviets, etc.), and to free them from the influence of the national bourgeoisie, with whom temporary agreements may be made only on the condition that they, the bourgeoisie, do not hamper the revolutionary organisation of the workers and peasants, and that they carry on a genuine struggle against imperialism.

In determining its line of tactics, each Communist Party must take into account the concrete internal and external situation, the correlation of class forces, the degree of stability and strength of the bourgeoisie, the degree of preparedness of the proletariat, the position taken up by the various intermediary strata, etc., in its country. The Party determines slogans and methods of struggle in accordance with these

circumstances, with the view to organising and mobilising the masses on the broadest possible scale and on the highest possible level of this struggle.

When a revolutionary situation is developing, the Party advances certain transitional slogans and partial demands corresponding to the concrete situation; but these demands and slogans must be bent to the revolutionary aim of capturing power and of overthrowing bourgeois capitalist society. The Party must neither stand aloof from the daily needs and struggles of the working class nor confine its activities exclusively to them. The task of the Party is to utilise these minor everyday needs as a starting point from which to lead the working class to the revolutionary struggle for power.

When the revolutionary tide is rising, when the ruling classes are disorganised, the masses are in a state of revolutionary ferment, the intermediary strata are inclining towards the proletariat and the masses are ready for action and for sacrifice, the Party of the proletariat is confronted with the task of leading the masses to a direct attack upon the bourgeois State. This it does by carrying on propaganda in favour of increasingly radical transitional slogans (for Soviets, workers' control of industry, for peasant committees, for the seizure of the big landed properties, for dis-arming the bourgeoisie and arming the proletariat, etc.), and by organising mass action, upon which all branches of Party agitation and propaganda, including parliamentary activity, must be concentrated. This mass action includes : strikes; a combination of strikes and demonstrations; a combination of strikes and armed demonstrations, and, finally, the general strike conjointly with armed insurrection against the State power of the bourgeoisie. The latter form of struggle, which is the supreme form, must be conducted according to the rules of war; it presupposes a plan of campaign, offensive fighting operations and unbounded devotion and heroism on the part of the proletariat. An absolutely essential condition precedent for this form of action is the organisation of the broad masses into militant units, which, by their very form, embrace and

set into action the largest possible numbers of toilers (councils of workers' deputies, soldiers' councils, etc.), and intensified revolutionary work in the army and the navy.

In passing over to new and more radical slogans, the Parties must be guided by the fundamental rôle of the political tactics of Leninism, which call for ability to lead the masses to revolutionary positions in such a manner that the masses may, by their own experience, convince themselves of the correctness of the Party line. Failure to observe this rule must inevitably lead to isolation from the masses, to putschism, to the degeneration of Communism into "leftist" dogmatism, and to petty-bourgeois "revolutionary" adventurism. Failure to take advantage of the culminating point in the development of the revolutionary situation, when the Party of the proletariat is called upon to conduct a bold and determined attack upon the enemy, is not less dangerous. To allow that opportunity to slip by and to fail to start rebellion at that point means to allow the initiative to pass to the enemy and to doom the revolution to defeat.

When the revolutionary tide is not rising, the Communist Parties must advance partial slogans and demands that correspond to the everyday needs of the toilers, and combine them with the fundamental tasks of the Communist International. The Communist Parties must not, however, at such a time, advance transitional slogans that are applicable only to revolutionary situations (for example workers' control of industry, etc.). To advance such slogans when there is no revolutionary situation means to transform them into slogans that favour merging with the capitalist system of organisation. Partial demands and slogans generally form an essential part of correct tactics; but certain transitional slogans go inseparably with a revolutionary situation. Repudiation of partial demands and transitional slogans "on principle," however, is incompatible with the tactical principles of Communism, for in effect such repudiation condemns the Party to inaction and isolates it from the masses. United front tactics also occupy an important place in the tactics of the Communist Parties



throughout the whole pre-revolutionary period as a means towards achieving success in the struggle against capital, towards the class mobilisation of the masses and the exposure and isolation of the reformist leaders.

The correct application of united front tactics and the fulfilment of the general task of winning over the masses pre-suppose in their turn systematic and persistent work in the trade unions and other mass proletarian organisations. It is the bounden duty of every Communist to belong to a trade union, even a most reactionary one, provided it is a mass organisation. Only by constant and persistent work in the trade unions and in the factories for the steadfast and energetic defence of the interests of workers, together with ruthless struggle against the reformist bureaucracy, will it be possible to win the leadership in the workers' struggle and to win industrially organised workers over to the side of the Party.

Unlike the reformists, whose policy is to split the trade unions, the Communists defend trade union unity nationally and internationally on the basis of the class struggle, and render every support to and strengthen the work of the Red Trade Union International.

In universally championing the current everyday needs of the masses of the workers and of the toilers generally, in utilising the bourgeois parliament as a platform for revolutionary agitation and propaganda, and subordinating the partial tasks to the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Parties of the Communist International advance partial demands and slogans in the following main spheres :

In the sphere of Labour, in the narrow meaning of the term, i.e., questions concerned with the industrial struggle (the fight against the trustified capitalist offensive, wages questions, the working day, compulsory arbitration, unemployment), which grow into questions of the general political struggle (big industrial conflicts, fight for the right to organise, right to strike, etc.); in the sphere of politics proper (taxation, high cost of living, fascism, persecution of revolutionary parties,

all, it is most important to have the strictest international discipline in the Communist ranks.

This international Communist discipline must find expression in the subordination of the partial and local interests of the movement to its general and lasting interests and in the strict fulfilment, by all members, of the decisions passed by the leading bodies of the Communist International.

Unlike the social-democratic Second International, each Section of which submits to the discipline of "its own," national bourgeoisie and of its own "fatherland," the Sections of the Communist International submit to only one discipline, viz., international proletarian discipline, which guarantees victory in the struggle of the world's workers for world proletarian dictatorship. Unlike the Second International which splits the trade unions, fights against colonial peoples and practices unity with the bourgeoisie, the Communist International is an organisation that guards proletarian unity in all countries and the unity of the toilers of all races and all peoples in their struggle against the yoke of imperialism.

Despite the bloody terror of the bourgeoisie, the Communists fight with courage and devotion on all sectors of the international class front, in the firm conviction that the victory of the proletariat is inevitable and cannot be averted.

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their aims can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all the existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."

*Working men of all countries, Unite !*

## Principles of Party Organisation\*

### Organisation And Structure of The Communist Party

#### I. General Principles

1. VANGUARD OF THE PROLETARIAT: The organisation of the Party must be adapted to the conditions and to the goal of its activity. The Communist Party must be the *vanguard, the advanced post of the proletariat*, through all the phases of revolutionary class struggle and during the subsequent transition period towards the realisation of Socialism, i. e., the first stage of the Communist society.

2. There can be no absolutely infallible and unalterable form of organisation for Communist Parties. The conditions of the proletarian class struggle are subject to changes in a continuous process of evolution, and in accordance with these changes, the organisation of the proletarian vanguard must be constantly seeking for the corresponding forms. The peculiar conditions of every individual country likewise determine the special adaption of the forms or organisation of the respective Parties.

But this differentiation has definite limits. Regardless of all peculiarities, the quality of the conditions of the proletarian class struggle in the various countries and through the various phases of the proletarian revolution is of fundamental

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\* The document which is being reprinted here is the 'Thesis on the Organisation of the Communist Parties' adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921. This basic document lays down the revolutionary principles of Communist organisation. It was drafted under Lenin's guidance and passed at the Congress led by him. A popular exposition of these general principles is given by Stalin in his book, 'Foundations of Leninism', published by National Book Agency Private Ltd., 1967.

importance to the international Communist movement, creating a common basis for the organisation of the Communist Parties in all countries.

Upon this basis, it is necessary to develop the organisation of the Communist Parties but not to seek to establish any new model parties instead of the existing ones and to aim at any absolutely correct form of organisation and ideal constitutions.

**3. INSTRUMENT OF THE REVOLUTION :** Most Communist Parties, and consequently the Communist International as the united party of the revolutionary proletariat of the world, have this common feature in their conditions of struggle, that they still have to fight against the dominant bourgeoisie. To conquer the bourgeoisie and to wrest the power from its hands is for all of them, until further developments, the determining and guiding main goal. *Accordingly, the determining factor in the organising activity of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries must be the upbuilding of such organisations as will make the victory of the proletarian revolution over the possessing classes both possible and secure.*

**4. ORGANISATION OF LEADERS :** Leadership is a necessary condition for any common action, but most of all it is indispensable in the greatest fight in the world's history. The organisation of the Communist Party is the organisation of Communist leadership in the proletarian revolution.

To be a good leader, the Party itself must have good leadership. Accordingly the principal task of our organisational work must be—education, organisation and training of efficient Communist Parties under capable directing organs to the leading place in the proletarian revolutionary movement.

**5. The leadership in the revolutionary class struggle** presupposes the organic combination of the greatest possible striking force and of the greatest adaptability on the part of the Communist Party and its leading organs to the everchanging conditions of the struggle. Furthermore, successful leadership requires absolutely the closest association with the proletarian

masses. Without such association, the leadership will not lead the masses, but at best, will follow behind the masses.

The organic unity in the Communist Party organisation must be attained through democratic centralisation.

## **II. On Democratic Centralisation**

6. **WHAT IT IS NOT :** Democratic centralisation in the Communist Party organisation must be a real synthesis, *a fusion of centralism and proletarian democracy*. This fusion can be achieved only on the basis of constant common activity, constant common struggle of the entire Party organisation. Centralisation in the Communist Party organisation does not mean formal and mechanical centralisation but a centralisation of Communist activities, that is to say, the formation of a strong leadership, ready for war and at the same time capable of adaptability. A formal or mechanical centralisation is the centralisation of the 'power' in the hands of an industrial bureaucracy, dominating over the rest of the membership or over the masses of the revolutionary proletariat standing outside the organisation. Only the enemies of the Communists can assert that the Communist Party conducting the proletarian class struggle and centralising the Communist leadership is trying to rule over the revolutionary proletariat. Such an assertion is a lie. Neither is any rivalry for power nor any contest for supremacy within the Party at all compatible with the fundamental principles of democratic centralism adopted by the Communist International.

**NEITHER BUREAUCRACY NOR FORMAL DEMOCRACY :** In the organisation of the old, non-revolutionary labour movement, there has developed an all-pervading dualism of the same nature as that of the bourgeois state, namely, the dualism between the bureaucracy and the 'people'. Under this baneful influence of bourgeois environment there has developed a separation of functions, a substitution of barren, formal democracy for the living association of common endeavour and the splitting up of the organisation into active functionaries and

passive masses. Even the revolutionary labour movement inevitably inherits this tendency to dualism and formalism to a certain extent from the bourgeois environment.

The Communist Party must fundamentally overcome these contrasts by systematic and persevering political and organising work and by constant improvement and revision.

7. In transforming a Socialist mass party into a Communist Party, the Party must not confine itself to merely concentrating the authority in the hands of its central leadership while leaving the old order unchanged. Centralisation should not merely exist on paper, but be actually carried out, and this is possible of achievement only when the members at large will feel this authority as a fundamentally efficient instrument in their common activity and struggle. Otherwise, it will appear to the masses as a bureaucracy within the Party and, therefore, likely to stimulate opposition to all centralisation, to all leadership, to all stringent discipline. Anarchism is the opposite pole of bureaucracy.

Merely formal democracy in the organisation cannot remove either bureaucratic or anarchical tendencies, which have found fertile soil on the basis of just that democracy. Therefore, the centralisation of the organisation, i.e., the aim to create a strong leadership, cannot be successful if its achievement is sought on the basis of formal democracy. The necessary preliminary conditions are the development and maintenance of living associations and mutual relations within the Party between the directing organs and members, as well as between the Party and the masses of the proletariat outside the Party.

### **III. On the Duties of Communist Activity**

8. **FIRST DUTY OF A MEMBER :** The Communist Party must be a training school for revolutionary Marxism. The organic ties between the different parts of the organisation and the membership become joined through the daily common work in the Party activities.

Regular participation on the part of most of the members in the daily work of the parties is lacking even today in lawful Communist Parties. That is the chief fault of these parties, forming the basis of constant insecurity in their development.

9. In the first stages of its Communist transformation every workmen's party is in danger of being content with having accepted a Communist programme, with having substituted the old doctrine in its propaganda by Communist teaching and having replaced the official belonging to the hostile camp by Communist officials. The acceptance of the Communist programme is only the expression of the will to become a Communist. If the Communist activity is lacking and the passivity of the mass members still remains, then the Party does not fulfil even the least part of the pledge it had taken upon itself in accepting the Communist programme. *For the first condition of an earnest carrying out of the programme is the participation of all the members in the constant daily work of the Party.*

The art of Communist organisation lies in the ability of making a use of each and every one for the proletarian class struggle; of distributing the Party work amongst all the Party members and of constantly attracting through its members ever wider masses of the proletariat to the revolutionary movement. Further it must hold the direction of the whole movement in its hands not by virtue of its might, but by its authority, energy, greater experience, greater all-round knowledge and capabilities.

10. A Communist Party must strive to have only really active members, and to demand from every rank and file Party worker, that he should place his whole strength and time, in so far as he can himself dispose of it under existing conditions at the disposal of his Party and devote his best forces to these services.

Membership in the Communist Party entails naturally, besides Communist convictions, formal registration, first as a candidate, then as a member, likewise, the regular payment of the established fees, the subscription to the Party paper,

etc. But the most important is the participation of each member in the daily work of the Party.

**11. EVERY MEMBER IN A PARTY UNIT :** For the purpose of carrying out the Party work every member must as a rule be also a member of a working smaller group, a committee, a commission, a broad group, fraction or nucleus. Only in this way can the Party work be properly distributed, directed and carried on.

Attendance at the general meeting of the members of the local organisation, of course, goes without saying; it is not wise to try, under conditions of legal existence, to replace these periodical meetings under lawful conditions by meetings of local representatives. All the members must be bound to attend these meetings regularly. But that is in no way sufficient. The very preparation of these meetings presupposes work in smaller groups or through comrades detailed for the purpose, effectively utilising as well as the preparations of the general workers' meetings, demonstrations and mass action of the working class. The numerous tasks connected with these activities can be carefully studied only in smaller groups, and carried out intensively. Without such a constant daily work of the entire membership divided among the great mass of smaller groups of workers even the most laborious endeavours to take part in the class struggle of the proletariat will lead only to weak and futile attempts to influence these struggles, but not to the necessary consolidation of all the vital revolutionary forces of the proletariat into a single united capable Communist Party.

**12. IMPORTANCE OF FACTORY CELLS :** Communist nuclei must be formed for the daily work in the different branches of the Party activities; for timely agitation, for Party study, for newspaper work, for the distribution of literary matter, for information service, for constant service, etc.

The Communist nuclei are the kernel groups for the daily Communist work in the factories and workshop in the trade unions, in the proletarian associations, in military units, etc. Wherever there are at least several members or candidates for



membership in the Communist Party. If there are a greater number of Party members in the same factory or in the same union, etc., then the nucleus is enlarged into a fraction and its work is directed to the kernel group.

Should it be necessary to form a wider opposition fraction or to take part in existing one, then the Communists should try to take the leadership in it through special nucleus. Whether a Communist nucleus is to come out in the open, as far as its own surroundings are concerned, or even before the general public, will depend on the special conditions of the case after a serious study of the dangers and the advantages thereof.

13. The introduction of general obligatory work in the Party and the organisation of these small working groups is an especially difficult task for Communist mass parties. It cannot be carried out all at once; it demands unwearied perseverance, mature consideration and much energy.

It is especially important that *this new form of organisation* should be carried out from the very beginning with care and mature consideration. It would be an easy matter to divide all the members in each organisation according to a formal scheme into small nuclei and groups and to call these latter at once to the general daily Party work. Such a beginning would be worse than no beginning at all; it would only call forth discontent and aversion among the Party members towards these important innovations.

**HOW TO BUILD COMMUNIST CELLS :** It is recommended that the Party should take counsel with several capable organisers who are also convinced and inspired Communists, and thoroughly acquainted with the state of the movement in the various centres of the country, and work out a detailed foundation for the introduction of these innovations. After that trained organisers or organising committees must take up the work on the spot, elect the first leaders of the groups and conduct the first steps of the work. All the organisations, working groups, nuclei and individual members must then receive concrete, precisely defined tasks presented in such a

way as to at once appear to them to be useful, desirable and capable of execution. Wherever it may be necessary they must be shown by practical demonstrations in what way these tasks are to be carried out. They must be warned at the same time of the false steps especially to be avoided.

14. This work of re-organisation must be carried out in practice step by step. In the beginning too many nuclei or groups of workers should not be formed in the local organisation. It must first be proved in small cases that the nuclei formed in separated important factories and trade unions are functioning properly and that the necessary groups of workers have been formed also in the other chief branches of the Party activities and have in some degree become consolidated (for instance, in the information, communication, women's movement, or agitation department, newspaper work, unemployment movement etc.). Before the new organisation apparatus will have acquired a certain practice the old frames of the organisation should not be heedlessly broken up. At the same time this fundamental task of the Communist organisation work must be carried out everywhere with the greatest energy. This places great demands not only on a legalised Party, but also on every unlegalised Party.

*Until widespread network of Communist nuclei, fractions and groups of workers will be at work at all central points of the proletarian class struggle, until every member of the Party will be doing his share of the daily revolutionary work and this will have become natural and habitual for the members, the Party can allow itself no rest in its strenuous labours for the carrying out of this task.*

15. CHECKING UP : This fundamental organisational task imposes upon the leading Party organs the obligation of constantly directing and exercising a systematic influence over the Party work. This requires manifold exertion on the part of those comrades who are active in the leadership of their organisations of the Party. Those in charge of Communist activity must not only see to it that comrades—men and women—should be engaged in Party work in general, they

must help and direct such work systematically and with practical knowledge of the business with a precise orientation in regard to special conditions. They must also endeavour to find out any mistake committed in their own activities on the basis of experience, constantly improving the methods of work and not forgetting for a moment the object of the struggle.

**16. REPORTING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM—KEY TASK OF LEADERSHIP:** Our whole Party work, consists either of direct struggles on theoretical or practical grounds or of preparation for the struggle. The specialisation of this work has been very defective up to now. There are quite important branches in which the activity of the Party has been only occasional. For the lawful parties have done little in the matter of combating against secret service men. The instructing of our Party comrades has been carried on as a rule, only casually, as a secondary matter and so superficially that the greater part of the most important resolutions of the Party, even the Party programme and the resolutions of the Communist International have remained unknown to the large strata of the membership. The instruction work must be carried on methodically and unceasingly through the whole system of the Party organisation in all the working committees of the Parties in order to obtain an ever-higher degree of specialisation.

**17.** To the duties of the Communist activity belongs also that of submitting reports. This is the duty of all the organisations and organs of the Party as well as every individual member. There must be general reports made covering short periods of time. Special reports must be made on the work of special committees of the party. It is essential to make the work of reporting so systematic that it should become an established procedure as the best tradition of the Communist movement.

**18. EVERY ORGANISATION REPORTS TO ITS LEADING COMMITTEE:** The Party must hand in its quarterly report to the leading body of the Communist International. Each organisation in the Party has to hand in its report to the next leading committee (for

instance, monthly report of the local branches to the corresponding Party committee).

Each nucleus, fraction and group of workers must send its report to the Party organ under whose leadership it is placed. The individual members must hand in their reports to the nucleus or group of workers (respectively to the leader) to which he belongs, and on the carrying out of some special charge to the Party organ from which the order was received.

The report must always be made on the first opportunity. It is to be made by word of mouth, unless the Party or the person who had given the order demands written report. The reports must be concise and to the point. The receiver of the report is responsible for having such communication as cannot be published without harm kept in safe custody and that important reports be sent in without delay to the corresponding Party organ.

**19. HOW TO REPORT :** All these reports must naturally be limited to the account of what the reporter has done himself. They must contain also information on such circumstances which may have come to light during the course of the work and which have a certain significance for our struggle, particularly such considerations as may give rise to a modification or improvement of our future work, also proposals for improvement necessity for which may have made itself felt during the work, must be included in the report.

In all Communist nuclei, fractions and groups of workers, all reports, both those which have been handed into them and those that they have to send, must be thoroughly discussed. Such discussions must become a regular habit.

*Care must be taken in the nuclei and groups of workers that individual Party members or groups of members be regularly charged with observing and reporting on hostile organisations, especially with regard to the petty-bourgeois workers' organisations and chiefly the organisation of the "socialist" parties.*

#### **IV. On Propaganda and Agitation**

**20. OUR PROPAGANDA IS REVOLUTIONARY :** Our chief general duty to the open revolutionary struggle is to carry on revolutionary propaganda and agitation. This work and its organisation is still, in the main, being conducted in the old formal manner, by means of casual speeches at the mass meetings and without special care for the concrete revolutionary substance of the speeches and writings.

Communist propaganda and agitation must be made to take root in the very midst of the workers, out of their common interests and aspirations, and especially out of their common struggles.

The most important point to remember is—that *Communist propaganda must be of a revolutionary character*. Therefore, the Communist watchword (slogans) and the whole Communist attitude towards concrete questions must receive our special attention and consideration.

In order to achieve that correct attitude, not only the professional propagandists and agitators but also all others Party members must be carefully instructed.

**21. FORMS OF PROPAGANDA AND SLOGANS :** The principal forms of Communist propaganda are :

(i) Individual verbal propaganda.

(ii) Participation in the industrial and political labour movement.

(iii) Propaganda through the Party Press and distribution of literature. Every member of a legal and illegal Party is to participate regularly in one or the other of these forms of propaganda.

Individual propaganda must take the form of systematic house to house canvassing by special groups of workers. Not a single house within the area of Party influence must be omitted from this canvassing. In larger towns a special organised outdoor campaign with posters and distribution of leaflets usually produce satisfactory results. In addition the fraction should carry on a regular personal agitation in the workshops accompanied by a distribution of literature.

In countries whose population contains national minorities, it is the duty of the Party to devote the necessary attention to propaganda and agitation among the proletarian strata of these minorities. *The propaganda and agitation must, of course, be conducted in the languages of the respective national minorities, for which purpose the Party must create the necessary special organs.*

22. In those capitalist countries where a large majority of the proletariat has not yet reached revolutionary consciousness, the Communist agitation must be constantly on the lookout for new forms of propaganda in order to meet these backward workers half-way and thus facilitate their entry into the revolutionary ranks. The Communist propaganda with its watchwords (slogans) must bring out the budding, unconscious, incomplete, vacillating and semi-bourgeois revolutionary tendencies which are struggling for supremacy with the bourgeois traditions and conceptions in the minds of the workers.

At the same time, Communist propaganda must not rest content with the limited and confused demands or aspirations of the proletarian masses. These demands and expectations contain revolutionary germs and are a means of bringing the proletariat under the influence of Communist propaganda.

23. LEAD THE DAILY STRUGGLES OF THE WORKING CLASS : Communist agitation among the proletarian masses must be conducted in such a way that our Communist organisation appears as the courageous, intelligent, energetic and ever-faithful leader of their own labour movement.

In order to achieve this, the Communist must take part in all the elementary struggles and movements of the workers, and must defend the workers' cause in all conflicts between them and the capitalists over hours and conditions of labour, wages, etc. The Communists must also pay great attention to the concrete questions of working class life. They must help the workers to come to a right understanding of these questions. They must draw their attention to the most flagrant abuses and must help them to formulate their demands in a practical and concise form. In this way they will awaken in

the workers the spirit of solidarity, the consciousness of community of interests among all the workers of the country as a united working class, which in its turn is a section of the world army of proletarians.

It is only through an every day performance of such elementary duties and participation in all the struggles of the proletariat that the Communist Party can develop into a real Communist Party. It is only by adopting such methods that it will be distinguished from the propagandists of the hackneyed, so-called pure socialist propaganda, consisting of recruiting new members and talking about reforms and the use of parliamentary possibilities or rather impossibilities. The self-sacrificing and conscious participation of all the Party members in the daily struggles and controversies of the exploited with the exploiters is essentially necessary not only for the conquest, but in a still higher degree for the carrying out of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is only through leading the working masses in the petty warfare against the onslaughts of capitalism that the Communist Party will be able to become the vanguard of the working class, acquiring the capacity for systematic leadership of the proletariat in its struggle for supremacy over the bourgeoisie.

24. IN THE FOREFRONT OF EVERY STRUGGLE : Communists must be mobilised in full force, especially in times of strikes, lockouts, and other mass dismissals of workers in order to take part in the workers' movement.

It would be a great mistake for Communists to treat with contempt the present struggles of workers for slight improvements in their working conditions, even to maintain a passive attitude to them on the plea of the Communist programme and the need of armed revolutionary struggle for final aims. No matter how small and modest the demands of the workers may be, for which they are ready and willing to fight today with the capitalist, the Communists must never make the smallness of the demands an excuse at the same time for non-participation in the struggle. Our agitational activity should not lay itself bare to the accusation of stirring up and inciting

the workers to nonsensical strikes and other inconsiderate actions. *The Communist must try to acquire the reputation among the struggling masses of being courageous and effective participator in their struggle.*

25. **LEARN TO WAGE FIGHT FOR PARTIAL DEMANDS :** The Communist cells (or fractions) within the trade union movement have proved themselves in practice rather helpless before some of the most ordinary questions of every day life. It is easy, but not fruitful, to keep on preaching the general principles of Communism and then fall into the negative attitude of common place syndicalism when faced with concrete questions. Such practices only play into the hands of the Yellow Amsterdam International.

Communists should, on the contrary, be guided in their actions by a careful study of every aspect of the question.

For instance, instead of contenting themselves with resisting theoretically and on principle all working agreements (over wages & working conditions), they should rather take the lead in the struggle over the specific nature of the tariffs (wage agreements) recommended by the Amsterdam leaders. It is, of course, necessary to condemn and resist any kind of impediment to the revolutionary preparedness of the proletariat and it is a well-known fact that it is the aim of the capitalists and their Amsterdam myrmidons to tie the hands of the workers by all manners of working agreements. Therefore, it behoves the Communists to open the eyes of the workers to the nature of the aims. This the Communists can best attain by advocating agreements which would not hamper the workers.

The same should be done in connection with the unemployment, sickness and other benefits of the trade union organisations. The creation of fighting funds and the granting of strike pay are measures which in themselves are to be commended.

Therefore the opposition on principle against such activities would be ill-advised. But Communists should point out



to the workers that the manner of collection of these funds and their use as advocated by the Amsterdam leaders is against all the interests of the working class. In connection with the sickness benefit etc., Communists should insist on the abolition of the contributory system, and of all binding conditions in connection with all volunteer funds. If some of the trade union members are still anxious to secure sickness benefit by paying contributions, it would not do for us to simply prohibit such payments for fear of not being understood by them. It will be necessary to win over such workers from their small bourgeois conceptions by an intensive personal propaganda.

26. **MAKE CONCRETE EXPOSURES OF REFORMIST LEADERS :** In the struggle against Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois trade union leaders, as well as against the leaders of various labour parties one cannot hope to achieve much by persuasion. The struggle against them should be conducted in the most energetic fashion and the best way to do this is by depriving them of their following, showing up to the workers the true character of these treacherous socialist leaders who are only playing into the hands of capitalism. The Communists should endeavour to unmask these so-called leaders, and subsequently, attack them in the most energetic fashion.

It is by no means sufficient to call Amsterdam leaders (i.e., leaders of the reformist trade unions) yellow. Their yellowness must be proved by continual, and practical illustrations. Their activities in the trade unions, in the International Labour Bureau of the League of Nations, in the bourgeois ministries and administration, their treacherous speeches at conferences and parliaments, the exhortations contained in many of their written messages and in the Press and above all, their vacillations and hesitating attitude in all struggles even for the most modest rise in wages, offer constant opportunities for exposing the treacherous behaviour of the Amsterdam leaders in simple worded speeches and resolutions.

The fraction must conduct their practical vanguard movement in a systematic fashion. The Communists must not at all allow the excuses of the minor trade union officials—who, notwithstanding good intentions, often take refuge, through sheer weakness, behind statutes, union decisions and instructions from their superiors to hamper their march forward. On the contrary, they must insist on getting satisfaction from the minor officials in the matter of removal of all real or imaginary obstacles put in the way of the workers by the bureaucratic machine.

**27. HOW FRACTIONS MUST WORK :** The fractions must carefully prepare the participation of the Communists in conferences and meetings of the trade union organisations. For instance, they must elaborate proposals, select lecturers and counsels and put up candidates for elections capable, experienced and energetic comrades. The Communist organisations must, through their fractions, also make careful preparations in connection with all workers' meetings, election meetings, demonstration, political festivals and such like arranged by the hostile organisations. *Wherever Communists convene their own worker's meetings, they must arrange to have considerable groups of Communists distributed among the audience and they must make all the preparations for the assurance of satisfactory propaganda result.*

**28. WORK IN ALL WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS :** Communists must also learn how to draw unorganised and backward workers permanently into the ranks of Party. With the help of our fractions, we must induce the workers to join the trade unions and to read our Party organs. Other organisations, as for instance educational boards, study circles, sporting clubs, dramatic societies, co-operative societies, consumers' associations, war victims' organisations, etc., may be used as intermediaries between us and the workers. Where the Communist Party is working illegally, such workers' association may be formed outside the Party through the initiative of Party members and with the consent and under the control of the leading Party organs (unions of sympathisers).

Communist youth and women's organisations may also be helpful in rousing the interests of many politically indifferent proletarians, and in drawing them eventually inside the Communist Party through the intermediary of their educational courses, reading circles, excursions, festivals, Sunday rambles, etc., distributing of leaflets, increasing the circulation of the Party organ, etc. Through participation in the general movement, the workers will free themselves from their small bourgeois inclinations.

**29. WIN OVER THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS SECTIONS :** In order to win the semi-proletarian sections of the workers as sympathisers of the revolutionary proletariat the Communists must make use of their special antagonism to the landowners, the capitalists and the capitalist state in order to win those intermediary groups from their mistrust of the proletariat. This may require prolonged negotiations with them, or intelligent sympathy with their needs, free help and advice in any difficulties, also opportunities to improve their education, etc., all of which will give them confidence in the Communist movement. The Communists must also endeavour to counteract the pernicious influence of hostile organisations which occupy authoritative positions in the respective districts or may have influence over the petty-bourgeois working peasants, over those who work in the home industries and other semi-proletarian classes. These are known by the exploited, from their own bitter experience, to be the representatives and embodiment of the entire criminal capitalist system, and must be unmasked. All every day occurrences which bring the state bureaucracy into conflict with the ideals of petty-bourgeois democracy and jurisdiction, must be made use of in a judicious and energetic manner in the course of Communist agitation. Each local country organisation must carefully apportion among its members the duties of house to house canvassing in order to spread Communist propaganda in all the villages, farmsteads and isolated dwellings in their district.

**30. WORK AMONG THE ARMED FORCES :** The methods of

propaganda in the armies and navies of capitalist states must be adaptable to the peculiar conditions in each country. Antimilitarist agitation of a pacifist nature is extremely detrimental and only assists the bourgeoisie in its efforts to disarm the proletariat. The proletariat rejects on principle and combats with the utmost energy every kind of military institution of the bourgeois state, and of the bourgeois class in general. Nevertheless, it utilises these institutions (army, rifle-clubs, citizens' guard organisation, etc.) for the purpose of giving the workers military training for the revolutionary battles to come. Intensive agitation must therefore be directed, not against the military training of the youth and workers. Every possibility of providing the workers with weapons should most eagerly be taken advantage of.

The class antagonisms revealing themselves as they do in the materially favoured positions of the officers as against the bad treatment and social insecurity of life of the common soldiers, must be made very clear to the soldiers. Besides, the agitation must bring home the fact to the rank and file that its future is inextricably bound up with the fate of the exploited classes. In a more advanced period of incipient revolutionary fermentation, agitation for the democratic election of all commanders by the privates and sailors and for the formation of soldier's councils, may prove very advantageous in undermining the foundations of capitalist rule.

The closest attention and the greatest care are always required when agitating the picked troops used by the bourgeoisie in the class war, and especially against its volunteer bands.

Moreover the social composition and corrupt conduct of these troops and bands make it possible, every favourable moment for agitation should be made use of for creating disruption. Wherever it possesses a distinct bourgeois class character, as for example in the officer corps, it must be un-masked before the entire population and made so despicable and repulsive that they will be disrupted from within by virtue of their very isolation.

## **V. The Organisation of Political Struggle**

**31. HOW POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS MUST BE RUN :** For the Communist Party, there can be no period in which its Party organisation cannot exercise political activity. For the purpose of utilising every political and economic situation, organisational strategy and tactics must be developed. No matter how weak the Party may be, it can nevertheless take advantage of exciting political events or of extensive strikes, affecting the entire economic system, by radical propaganda systematically and efficiently organised. Once a Party has decided to thus make use of a particular situation, it must concentrate the energy of all its members and Party in this campaign.

Furthermore all the connections which the Party possesses through the work of its nuclei and its workers' groups must be used for organising mass meetings in the centres of political importance and following up a strike. The speakers for the Party must do their utmost to convince the audience that only Communism can bring the struggle to a successful conclusion. Special commissions must prepare these meetings very thoroughly. If the Party cannot for some reasons hold meetings of its own, suitable comrades should address the strikers at the general meetings organised by the strikers or any other sections of the struggling proletariat.

Wherever there is a possibility of inducing the majority or a large part of any meeting to support our demand, these must be well-formulated and properly argued in motions and resolutions being passed, attempts must be made to have similar resolutions or motions adopted in ever-increasing numbers, at any rate supported by strong minorities at all the meetings held on the same question at the same place or in other localities. In this way we shall be able to consolidate the working masses in the movement, put them under our moral influence, and have them recognise our leadership.

After all such meetings the committees which participated in the organisational preparations and utilised its opportunities,

must hold a conference to make a report to be submitted to the leading committees of the Party and draw the proper conclusion from the experience or possible mistakes, made for the future. In accordance with each particular situation, the practical demands of the workers involved must be made public by means of posters and handbills of leaflets distributed among the workers proving to them by means of their own demands how the Communist policies are in agreement with and applicable to the situation. Specially organised groups are required for the proper distribution of posters, the choice of suitable spots, as well as the proper time for such pasting. The distribution of handbills should be carried out in and before the factories and in the halls where the workers concerned want to gather, also at important points in the town, employment offices and stations, such distribution of leaflets should be accompanied by attractive discussions and slogans, readily permeating all the ranks of the working masses. Detailed leaflets should, if possible, be distributed only in halls, factories, dwellings or other places where proper attention to the printed matter may be expected.

Such propaganda must be supported by parallel activity at all the trade unions and factory meetings held during the conflict and at such meetings, whether organised by our comrades or only favoured by us, suitable speakers and debators must seize the opportunity of convincing the masses of our point of view. Our Party newspapers must place at the disposal of such a special movement greater part of their space as well as their best arguments. In fact, the active Party organisations must, for the time being, be made to serve the general purpose of such a movement whereby our comrades may work with unabated energy.

**32. MOBILE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATION BASED ON FACTORY CELLS IS THE GUARANTEE OF SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION :** Demonstrations require very mobile and self-sacrificing leadership closely intent upon the aim of a particular action, and able to discern at any given moment whether a demonstration has reached its highest possible effectiveness, or whether

during that particular situation a further intensification is possible by inducing an extension of the movement into an action of the masses by means of demonstration, strikes and eventually general strikes. The demonstrations in favour of peace during the war have taught us, that even after dispersal of such demonstrations, a really proletarian fighting Party must neither deviate nor stand still, no matter how small or illegal it may be, if the question at issue is of real importance, and is bound to become of ever greater interest for the large masses. Street demonstrations attain greatest effectiveness when their organisation is based on the large factories. When efficient preparations by our nuclei and groups by means of verbal and handbill propaganda has succeeded in bringing about a certain unity of thought and action in a particular situation, the managing committee must call the confidential Party members in the factories and the leaders of the nuclei and groups to a conference, to discuss and fix the time and business of the meeting on the day planned, as well as the determination of slogans, the prospects of intensification and the moment of cessation and dispersal of the demonstration. The backbone of the demonstration must be formed by a well-instructed and experienced group of diligent officials, mingling among the masses from the moment of departure from the factories up to the time of the dispersal of demonstration. Responsible Party workers must be systematically distributed among the masses, for the purpose of enabling the officials to maintain active contact with each other and keeping them provided with the requisite political instructions. Such a mobile, politically organised leadership of a demonstration permits most effectively of constant renewal and eventual intensification into greater mass actions.

33. ORGANISATION OF UNITED WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLES & THE ISOLATION OF THE REFORMISTS : Communist Parties already possessing internal firmness, a tried corps of officials and a considerable number of adherents among the masses, must

exert every effort to completely overcome the influence of the treacherous socialist leaders of the working class by means of extensive campaign, and to rally the majority of the working masses to the Communist banner. Campaigns must be organised in various ways depending upon whether the situation favours actual fighting, in which case they become active and put themselves at the head of the proletarian movement, or whether it is a period of temporary stagnation.

The make-up of the Party is also one of the determining factors for selection of the organisational methods for such actions.

For example, the methods of publishing a so-called "open letter" was used in order to win over the socially decisive sections of the proletariat in Germany to a greater extent than had been possible in other countries. In order to unmask the treacherous socialist leaders, the Communist Party of Germany addressed itself to the other mass organisations of the proletariat at a moment of increasing desolation and intensification of class conflicts, for the purpose of demanding from them, before the eyes of the proletariat, whether they, with their alleged powerful organisations, were prepared to take up the struggle in co-operation with the Communist Party, against the obvious destitution of the proletariat and for the slightest demands even for a pitiful piece of bread.

Wherever the Communist Party initiates a similar campaign, it must make complete organisational preparations for the purpose of making such an action reach among the broad masses of the working class.

All the factory groups and trade union officials of the Party must bring the demand made by the Party, representing the embodiment of the most vital demands of the proletariat to a discussion at their next factory and trade union meetings, as well as at all public meetings, after having thoroughly prepared for such meetings. For the purpose of taking advantage of the temper of the masses, leaflets, handbills and posters must be distributed everywhere and effectively at all places



where our nuclei or groups intend to make an attempt to influence the masses to support our demands. Our Party Press must engage in constant elucidation of the problems of the movement during the entire period of such a campaign, by means of short, or detailed daily articles, treating the various phases of the question from every possible point of view. The organisation must continually supply the Press with the material for such articles and pay close attention that the editors do not let up in their exertions for the furtherance of the Party campaign. The parliamentary groups and municipal representatives of the Party must also work systematically for the promotion of such struggles. They must bring the movement into discussion according to the direction of the Party leadership of the various parliamentary bodies by means of resolutions or motions. These representatives must consider themselves as conscious members of the struggling masses, their exponents in the camp of the class enemy, and as the responsible officials and Party workers.

In case the united, organisationally consolidated activities of all the forces of the Party succeed, within a few weeks in including the adoption of large and ever increasing numbers of resolutions supporting our demands, it will be the serious organisational task of our Party to consolidate the masses thus shown to be in favour of our demands. In the event of the movement having assumed a particular trade union character it must be attempted, above all, to increase our organisational influence in the trade unions.

To this end our groups in the trade unions must proceed to well-prepared direct action against the local trade union leaders in order either to overcome their influence, or else to compel them to wage an organised struggle on the basis of the demand of our Party. Wherever factory councils, industrial committees or similar institution exist, our groups must exert influence through plenary meetings of these industrial committees or factory councils also to decide in favour of supporting the struggle. If a number of local organisations have thus been influenced to support the movement for the bare living interests

of the proletariat under Communist leadership, they must be called together to general conferences, which should also be attended by the special delegates of the factory meetings at which favourable resolutions were adopted.

## **VI. The New Leadership**

**FROM PARTIAL STRUGGLES TO CO-ORDINATED STRUGGLES :** The new leadership consolidated under Communist influence in this manner, gains new power by means of such concentration of the active groups of the organised workers, and this power must be utilised to give an impetus to the leadership of the socialist parties and trade unions or else to fully unmask it.

In those industrial regions where our Party possesses its best organisations and has obtained the greatest support for its demands, they must succeed by means of organised pressure on the local trade unions and industrial councils, in uniting all the evident economic isolated struggles in these regions, as well as the developing movement of other groups, into one co-ordinated struggle.

This movement must then draw up elementary demands entirely apart from the particular craft interests, and then attempt to obtain the fulfilment of these demands by utilising the united forces of all organisations in the district. In such movement the Communist Party will then prove to be the leader of the proletarians prepared for struggle, whereas the trade union bureaucracy and the socialist party who would oppose such a united, organised struggle, would then be exposed in their true colours, not only politically, but also from a practical organisational point of view.

**34. HOW TO SHAPE DEVELOPMENTS DURING AN ACUTE CRISIS :** During acute political and economic crisis causing as they do new movements, the Communist Party should attempt to gain control of the masses. It may be better to forego any specific demands and rather appeal directly to the members of the socialist parties and the trade unions pointing out how distress and oppression have driven them into the unavoidable fights with their employers in spite of the attempts of their bureaucratic

leaders to avoid a decisive struggle. The organs of the Party, particularly the daily newspapers, must emphasise day by day, that the Communists are ready to take the lead in the impending and actual struggle of the distressed workers, that their fighting organisation is ready to lend a helping hand wherever possible to all the oppressed in the given acute situation. It must be pointed out daily that without these struggles there is no possibility of increasing tolerable living conditions for the workers in spite of the efforts of the old organisations to avoid and to obstruct those struggles. The Communist fractions within the trade unions and industrial organisations must lay stress continually upon the self-sacrificing readiness of the Communists and make it clear to their fellow workers that the fight is not to be avoided. The main task, however, is to unify and consolidate all the struggles and movements arising out of the situation. The various nuclei and fractions of the industries and crafts which have been drawn into the struggles must not only maintain the closest ties among themselves, but also assume the leadership of all the movements that may break out, through the district committees as well as through the central committees furnishing promptly such officials and responsible workers as will be able to lead a movement, hand in hand, with those engaged in the struggle, to broaden and deepen that struggle and make it widespread. It is the main duty of the organisation everywhere to point out and emphasise the common character of all the various struggles, in order to foster the idea of the general solution of the question by political means, if necessary. As the struggles become more intensified and general in character, it becomes necessary to create uniform organs for the leadership of the struggles. Wherever the bureaucratic strike leaders have failed, the Communists must come in at once and ensure a determined organisation of action—the common preliminary organisation—which can be achieved under capable militant leadership, by persistent advocacy at the meeting of the fractions and industrial councils as well as mass meetings of the industries concerned.

When the movement becomes widespread and owing to the onslaughts of the employer's organisations and government interference it assumes a political character, preliminary propaganda and organisation work must be started for the elections of worker's councils which may become possible and even necessary.

It is here that all Party organs should emphasise the idea that only by *forging their own weapons of the struggle can the working class achieve its own emancipation*. In this propaganda not the slightest consideration should be shown to the trade union bureaucracy or to the old socialist parties.

35. The Communist Parties which have already grown strong and particularly the big mass parties, must be equipped for mass action. All political demonstrations and economic mass movements, as well as local actions, must always tend to organise the experiences of those movements in order to bring about a close union with the wide masses. The experience gained by all great movements must be discussed at broad conferences of the leading officials and responsible Party workers, with the trusted (trade union) representatives of large and middle industries and in this manner the network of communication will be constantly increased and strengthened and the trusted representatives of industries will become increasingly permeated with the fighting spirit. The ties of mutual confidence between the leading officials and responsible Party workers, with the shop delegates, are the best guarantee that there will be no premature political mass action, in keeping with the circumstances and the actual strength of the Party.

Without building closest ties between the Party organisations and the proletarian masses employed in the big mass actions, a really revolutionary movement cannot be developed. The untimely collapse of the undoubtedly revolutionary upheaval in Italy last year which found its strong expression in the seizing of factories was certainly due to a great extent to the treachery of the trade unionist bureaucracy, unreliability of the political party leaders, but partly also to the total lack of

intimacies of organisation between the Party and the industries through politically informed shop delegates interested in the welfare of the Party. Also the English coal-miners' strike of the present year (1921) has undoubtedly suffered through this lack to an extraordinary degree.

## **VII. On The Party Press**

36. **DO'S & DONT'S FOR A COMMUNIST PAPER :** The Communist Press must be developed by the Party with indefatigable energy. No paper may be recognised as a Communist organ if it does not submit to the directions of the Party.

The Party must pay more attention to having good papers than to having many of them. Every Communist Party must have a good, and if possible, daily central organ.

37. A Communist newspaper must never be a capitalist undertaking as are the bourgeois, frequently also the socialist papers. Our paper must be independent of all the capitalist credit institutions. A skilful organisation of the advertisement, which render possible the existence of our paper for lawful mass parties, must never lead to its being dependent on the large advertisers. On the contrary its attitude on all proletarian social questions will create the greater respect for it in all our mass Parties.

Our papers must not serve for the satisfaction of the desire for sensation or as a pastime for the general public. They must not yield to the criticism of the petty-bourgeois writers or journalist experts in the striving to become "respectable".

38. *The Communist paper must in the first place take care of the interests of the oppressed and fighting workers.* It must be our best agitator and the leading propagator of the proletarian revolution.

It will be the object of our paper to collect all the valuable experience from the activity of the party members and to demonstrate the same to our comrades as a guide for the continual revision and improvement of Communist working methods, in this way it will be the best organiser of our revolutionary work.

It is only by this all-embracing organisational work of the Communist paper and particularly our principal paper that with this definite object in view, we will be able to establish democratic centralism and lead to the efficient distribution of work in the Communist Party, thus enable it to perform its historic mission.

**39. ORGANISATION OF A COMMUNIST PAPER :** The Communist paper must strive to become a *Communist undertaking*, i.e., it must be a proletarian fighting organisation, a working community of the revolutionary workers, of all writers who regularly contribute to the paper, editors, type-setters, printers, and distributors, those who collect local material and discuss the same in the paper, those who are daily active in propagating it, etc. A number of practical measures are required to turn the paper into a real fighting organ and a strong working community of the Communists.\*

A Communist should be in closest connection with his paper when he has to work and make sacrifices for it. It is his daily weapon which must be newly hardened and sharpened every day in order to be fit for use. Heavy material and financial sacrifice will continually be required for the existence of the Communist paper. The means for its development and inner improvement will constantly have to be supplied from the ranks of Party members until it will have reached a position of such firm organisation and such a wide circulation among a legal mass Party that it will itself become a strong support of the Communist movement.

It is not sufficient to be an active canvasser and propagator for the paper, it is necessary to be contributor to it as well.

Every occurrence of any social or economic interest happening in the workshop—from an accident to a general workers' meeting, from the ill-treatment of an apprentice to the financial report of the concern—must be immediately reported to the paper. The trade union fraction must communicate all important decisions and resolutions of its meetings and secretariats, as well as any characteristic actions of our enemies. Public life in the street and at the meetings will often

give an opportunity to the attentive Party member to exercise social criticism on details which, published in our paper, will demonstrate even to indifferent readers how already we follow the daily needs of life.

**WORKER'S CORRESPONDENCE :** Such communications from the life of workers and working-class organisations must be handled by the board of editors with particular care and affection; they must be used as short notices that will help to convey the feeling of an intimate connection existing between our paper and workers' lives; or they may be used as practical examples from the daily life of workers that help to explain the doctrine of Communism. Whenever possible, the board of editors should have fixed hours at a convenient time of the day when they would be ready to see any worker coming to them and listen to his wishes or complaints on the troubles of life, which they sought to note and use for the enlightenment of the Party.

**EXAMPLE OF 'PRAVDA' :** Under the capitalist system it will of course be impossible for our papers to become a perfect Communist workers' community. However, even under most difficult conditions it might be possible to obtain a certain success in the organisation of such a revolutionary paper. This has been proved by the 'Pravda' of our Russian comrades during the period of 1912-13. It actually represented a permanent and active organisation of the conscious revolutionary workers of the most important Russian centres. The comrades used their collective forces for editing, publishing, distributing the paper, and many of them doing that alongside with their work and sparing the money required from their earnings. The newspaper in its turn furnished them with the best things they desired, with what they needed for the moment and what they can still use today in their work and struggle. Such a newspaper should really and truly be called by the Party members and by other revolutionary workers "our newspaper".

**40. INSTRUMENT OF RUNNING MASS CAMPAIGNS :** The proper element for the militant Communist Press is direct participation

in the campaigns conducted by the Party. If the activity of the Party at a given time happens to be concentrated upon a definite campaign it is the duty of the organ to place all its departments, not the editorial pages alone, at the service of this particular campaign. The editorial board must draw material and sources to feed this campaign, which must be incorporated throughout the paper both in substance and in form.

41. The matter of canvassing subscriptions for "our newspaper" must be made into a system. The first thing is to make use of every occasion stirring up workers and of every situation in which the political and social consciousness of the worker has been aroused by some special occurrence. Thus, following each big strike, movement or lockout, during which the paper openly and energetically defended the interests of the workers, a canvassing activity should be organised and carried on among the participants. Subscription lists and subscription orders for the paper should be distributed not only in the industries where the Communists are engaged and among the trade union fractions of those industries that had taken part in the strikes, but also whenever possible, subscription orders should be distributed from house to house by special groups or workers doing propaganda for the paper.

Likewise following each election campaign that aroused the workers, special groups appointed for the purpose should visit the houses of workers carrying on systematic propaganda for the workers' newspaper.

At times of latent political and economic crises manifesting themselves in the rise of prices, unemployment and other hardships affecting great numbers of workers, all possible efforts should be exerted to win over the professionally organised workers of the various industries and organise them into working groups for carrying on systematic house to house propaganda for newspaper. Experience has shown that the most appropriate time for canvassing work is the last week of each month. Any local group that would allow even one of these last week of the month to pass by without making use of it for propaganda work for the newspaper will



be committing a grave omission with regard to the spread of the Communist movement. The working group conducting propaganda for the newspaper must not leave out any public meeting or any demonstration without being there at the opening, during the intervals, and at the close with the subscription list for the paper. The same duties are imposed upon every trade union fraction at each separate meeting of the union, as well as upon the group and fraction at shop meetings.

**42. DEFEND THE PARTY PRESS :** Every Party member must constantly defend our paper against all its opponents and carry on energetic campaign against the capitalist Press. He must expose and brand-mark the venality, the falsehoods, the suppression of information and all the double-dealings of the Press.

The social-democratic and independent Press must be overcome by constant and aggressive criticism, without falling into petty factional polemising, but by persistent unmasking of their treacherous attitude in veiling the most flagrant class conflicts day by day. The trade union and other fractions must seek by organised means to wean away the members of trade unions and other workers' organisations from the misleading and crippling influence of these social-democratic papers. Also the canvassing by means of house to house campaign for our Press, notably among industrial workers, must be judiciously directed against the social-democratic Press.

### **VIII. On The Structure of the Party Organism**

**43. The Party organisation spreading out and fortifying itself** must not be organised upon a scheme of mere geographical divisions, but in accordance with the real economic, political and transport conditions of the given district. The centre of gravity is to be placed in the main cities, and the centres of large industries.

In the building up of a new Party, there usually manifests itself a tendency to have the Party organisation spread out at once all over the country. Thus disregarding the fact that the

number of workers at the disposal of the Party is very limited, these few workers are scattered in all directions. This weakens the recruiting ability and the growth of the Party. In such cases we saw an extensive system of Party offices springing up, but the Party itself did not succeed in gaining foothold even in the most important industrial cities.

**44. PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ORGANISATIONS :** In order to get the Party activity centralised to the highest possible degree, it is not advisable to have the Party leadership divided into an hierarchy with a number of groups subordinate to one another. The thing to be aimed at is that every large city forming an economic, political or transportation centre should spread out and form a net of organisations within a wide area of the surroundings of the given locality and the economic political districts adjoining it. The Party committee of the large centre should form the head of the general body of the Party and conduct the organisational activity of the district, directing its policy in close connection with the membership of the locality.

The organisers of such a district elected by the district conference and confirmed by the Central committee of the Party are obliged to take active part in the Party life of the local organisation. The Party committee of the district must be constantly reinforced by members from among the Party workers of the place, so that there should be close relationship between that committee and the large masses of the district. As the organisation keeps developing, efforts should be made to the effect that the leading committee of the district should at the same time be the leading political body of the place. Thus the Party committee of the district, together with the Central Committee should play the part of the real leading organ in the general Party organisation.

The boundary lines of the Party districts are not naturally limited by the area of the place. The determining factor should be that the district committee be in a position to direct the activities of all the local organisations within the district in a uniform manner. As soon as this becomes

impossible the district must be divided and new Party districts formed.

It is also necessary in the larger countries to have certain intermediate organisations serving as connecting links between the Central Committee and the local. Under certain conditions it may be advisable to give to some of these intermediary organisations, as for example, an organisation in a large city with a strong membership, a leading part, but as a general rule this should be avoided as leading to decentralisation.

**45. LOCAL ORGANISATION :** The large intermediary organisations are formed out of local Party organisations : country groups or of small cities and of districts, of the various parts of the large city.

Any local Party organisation that has grown to such an extent that it is existing as legal organisation, it can no longer conduct general meetings of all its membership, must be divided.

In any Party organisation the members must be grouped for daily Party activities. In large organisations it may be advisable to combine various groups into collective bodies. As a rule such members should be included in one group at their place of work or elsewhere and have occasion to meet one another in their daily activity. The object of such a collective group is to distribute Party activity among the various small or working groups, to receive reports from various officials and to train candidates for membership.

**46. E.C.C.I. :** The Party as a whole is to be under the guidance of the Communist International. The instructions and resolutions of the Executive of the International on methods affecting the affiliated parties are to be directed firstly, either (1) to their Central Committee of the Party, (2) through this Committee to some special committee or (3) to the members of the Party at large.

The instructions and resolutions of the International are binding upon the Party, and naturally also upon every Party member.

**47. CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND POLIT-BUREAU :** The Central Committee of the Party is elected at a Party Congress and is responsible to it. The Central Committee selects out of its own midst a smaller body consisting of two sub-committees for political activity. Both these sub-committees are responsible for the political and current work of the Party. These sub-committees or bureau arrange for the regular joint sessions of the Central Committee of the Party where decisions of immediate importance are to be passed. In order to study the general and political situation and gain a clear idea of the state of affairs in the Party, it is necessary to have various localities represented on the Central Committee whenever decisions are to be passed affecting the life of the entire Party. For the same reason differences of opinion regarding tactics should not be suppressed by the Central Committee if they are of a serious nature. On the contrary, these opinions should get representation upon the Central Committee. But the smaller bureau (Polit-Bureau) should be conducted along uniform lines, and in order to carry on a firm and sure policy, it must be able to rely upon its own authority as well as upon a considerable majority of the Central Committee.

Carried on such a basis the Central Committee of the Party, especially in cases of legal parties, will be able in the shortest time, to form a firm foundation for discipline requiring the unconditional confidence of the Party membership and at the same time manifesting vacillations and deviations that make their appearance done away with. Such abnormalities in the Party may be removed before reaching the stage where they should have to be brought up before a Party Congress for a decision.

**48. DIVISION OF WORK SUB-COMMITTEES :** Every leading Party committee must have its work divided among its members in order to achieve efficiency in the various branches of work. This may necessitate the formation of various special committees, as for example, committees for propaganda, for editorial work, for the trade union campaign, for

communications etc. Every special committee is subordinated either to the Central Committee or to the District Committee.

The control over the activity as well as the composition of all committees should be in the hands of the given district committees, and, in the last instance, in the hands of the Party Central Committee. It may become advisable from time to time to change the occupation and office of those people attached for various Party work such as, editors, organisers, propagandists, etc., provided that this does not interfere too much with the Party work. The editors and propagandists must participate in the regular Party work in one of the Party groups.

49. C.C.R. : The Central Committee of the Party as also the Communist International, is empowered at any time to demand complete reports from all Communist organisations, from their organs and individual members. The representatives of the Central Committee and comrades authorised by it are to be admitted to all meetings and sessions with a deciding voice. The Central Committee of the Party must always have at its disposal pleni-potentiaries (i.e., Commissars to instruct and inform the leading organs of the various districts and regions not only by means of their circulars and letters, but also by direct and verbal and responsible agencies on the questions of politics and organisations).

Every organisation and every branch of the Party, as well as every individual member has the right of communicating his respective wishes, suggestions, remarks or complaints directly to the Central Committee of the Party or to the International at any time.

50. SUBORDINATION OF LOWER BODIES TO HIGHER : The instructions and decisions of the leading party organs are obligatory for the subordinate organisations and for the individual members. The responsibilities of the leading organs and duty to prevent either delinquency or abuse of their leading position, can only partly be determined in a formal manner. The less their formal responsibility (as for instance, in unlegalised Parties) the greater the obligation upon them to study the

opinion of the Party members, to obtain regular and solid information, and to form their own decisions only after mature and thorough deliberation.

51. *The Party members are obliged to act always as disciplined members of a militant organisation in all their activities.* Should differences of opinion occur as to the proper mode of action, this should be determined as far as possible by previous discussions inside the Party organisation, and the action should be according to the decision thus arrived at. Even if the decision of the organisation or of the Party committee should appear faulty in the opinion of the rest of the members, these comrades in all their public activity should never lose sight of the fact that it is the worst form of undisciplined conduct and greatest military error to hinder or to break entirely the unity of the common front.

It is the supreme duty of every Party member to defend the Communist Party, and above all, the Communist International, against all the enemies of Communism. He, who forgets, on the contrary, and publicly assails the Party or the Communist International, is a bad Communist.

52. The statutes of the Party must be drawn in such a manner as not to become a hindrance but rather a helping force, to the leading Party organs in the Communist development of the general Party organisations and in the continuous improvement of the Party activity. The decisions of the Communist International must be promptly carried out by the affiliated Parties even in the case when corresponding alterations in the existing statutes and Party decisions can be adopted only at a later date.

## **IX. Legal and Illegal Activity**

53. **PREPAREDNESS :** The party must be so organised that it shall always be in a position to adapt itself quickly to all the changes that may occur in the conditions of the struggle. The Communist Party must develop into a militant organisation capable of avoiding fight in the open against overwhelming

forces of the enemy, concentrated upon a given point, but on the other hand, the very concentration of the enemy must be so utilised as to attack him on the spot where he least suspects it. It would be the greatest mistake for the Party organisation to stake everything upon rebellion and street-fighting or only upon condition of severe repression. *Communists perfect their preliminary revolutionary work in every situation on a basis of preparedness*, for it is frequently next to impossible to foresee the changeable wave of stormy and calm periods and even in cases it might be possible, this foresight cannot be made use of in many cases for reorganisation, because the change as a rule comes quickly and frequently quite suddenly.

54. COMBINATION OF LEGAL AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES : The legal Communist Parties of the capitalist countries usually fail to grasp all the importance of the task before the Party to be properly prepared for the armed struggle, or the illegal fight in general. Communist organisations often commit the error of depending on a permanent legal basis for their existence and of conducting their work according to the needs of the legal task.

On the other hand, illegal parties often fail to make use of all the possibilities of legal activities towards the building up of a Party organisation which would have constant intercourse with the revolutionary masses. Underground organisations which ignore these vital truths run the risks of becoming merely groups of conspirators wasting their labours in futile tasks.

Both these tendencies are erroneous. Every legal Communist organisation must know how to insure for itself complete preparedness for an underground existence, and above all for revolutionary outbreaks. Every illegal Communist organisation must, on the other hand, make the fullest use of the possibilities offered by the legal labour movement, in order to become, by means of intensive Party activity, the organised and real leader of the great revolutionary masses.

55. NO WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENT OF ILLEGAL FROM LEGAL : Both among legalised and underground Party circles there

is a tendency for the unlegalised Communist organisational activity to evolve into the establishment and maintenance of a purely military organisation isolated from the rest of the party organisation and activity. This is absolutely erroneous. On the contrary, during the pre-revolutionary period, the formation of our militant organisations must be mainly accomplished through the general work of the Communist Party. *The entire Party must be developed into a militant organisation for the revolution.*

Isolated revolutionary military organisations, prematurely created in a pre-revolutionary period are apt to show tendencies towards dissolution because of the lack of direct and useful Party work.

56. It is of course imperative for an illegal party to protect its members and Party organs from being found out by the authorities and to avoid every possibility of facilitating such discovery by registration, careless collection, by contribution and injudicious distribution of revolutionary material. For these reasons, it cannot use frank organisational methods to the same extent as the legal Party. It can nevertheless, through practice acquire more and more proficiency in this matter.

On the other hand, a legal mass Party must be fully prepared for illegal work and periods of struggle. It must never relax its preparations for any eventualities (viz. it must have safe hiding places for duplicates of members' files and must, in most cases, destroy correspondence, put important documents into safe keeping and must provide conspirative training for its messengers).

It is assumed in the circles of the legal as well as the illegal Parties, that the illegal organisations must be in the nature of a rather exclusive, entirely military institution, occupying within the Party a position of splendid isolation. This assumption is quite erroneous. The formation of our fighting organisation in the pre-revolutionary period must depend principally on the general Communist Party work. The entire Party must be made into a fighting organisation for the revolution.



**57. PARTY ORGANISATION SHOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTIONS :** Therefore, our general Party work must be apportioned in a manner which would ensure, already in the pre-revolutionary period, the foundation and consolidation of a fighting organisation commensurate with the needs of the revolution. It is of the greatest importance that the directing body of the Communist Party should be guided in its entire activity by the revolutionary requirement and that it should endeavour, as far as possible, to gain a clear idea of what these are likely to be. This is naturally not an easy matter, but that should not be a reason for leaving out of consideration this very important point of Communist organisational leadership.

Even the best organised Party would be faced with very difficult and complicated tasks if it had to undergo great functional changes in a period of open revolutionary risings. It is quite possible that our political Party will be called upon to mobilise in a few days its forces for the revolutionary struggle. Probably it will have to mobilise, in addition to the Party forces their reserves, the sympathising organisations, viz. the unorganised revolutionary masses. The formation of a regular Red Army is as yet out of the question. We must conquer without a previously organised army through the masses under the leadership of the Party. For this reason even the most determined effort would not succeed should our Party not be well-prepared and organised for such an eventuality.

**58. BUILD SPECIAL SECRET APPARATUS :** One has probably seen that the revolutionary central directive bodies have proved unable to cope with revolutionary situations. The proletariat has generally been able to achieve great revolutionary organisation as far as minor tasks are concerned, but there has nearly always been disorder, confusion and chaos at headquarters. Sometimes there has been a lack of even the most elementary "apportioning" of work. The intelligence department is often so badly organised that it does more harm than good. There is no reliance on postal and other communications. All secret postal and transport arrangements, secret

quarter and printing works are generally at the mercy of lucky or unlucky circumstances and afford fine opportunities for the "agent provocateurs" of the enemy forces.

These defects cannot be remedied unless the Party organises a special branch in its administration for this particular work. The military intelligence service requires practice and special training and knowledge. The same may be said of the secret work directed against the political police. It is only through long practice that the satisfactory secret department can be created. For all these specialised revolutionary work, every legal Communist Party must make preparations, no matter how small. In most cases such a secret apparatus may be created by means of perfectly legal activity.

For instance it is quite possible to establish secret postal and transport communications by a code system through the judiciously arranged distribution of legal leaflets and through correspondence in the press.

**59. DEVELOP EVERY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER FOR REVOLUTIONARY TASKS :** The Communist organiser must look upon every member of the Party and every revolutionary worker as a prospective soldier in the future revolutionary army. For this reason he must allot him a place which will fit him for his future role. His present activity must take the form of useful service, necessary for present Party work and not more drilling which the practical worker of today rejects. One must also not forget that this kind of activity is for every Communist the best preparation for the exigencies of the final struggle.

# **Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies**

**Thesis Adopted By The Sixth Congress of  
The Communist International : 1928**

## **I. Introduction**

### **Changes in the International Situation**

1. The Sixth Congress of the Communist International declares that the "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" drawn up by Lenin and adopted at the Second Congress are still valid, and should serve as a guiding line for the further work of the Communist Parties. Since the time of the Second Congress the actual significance of the colonies and semi-colonies, as factors of crisis in the imperialist world system, has vastly increased.

On the one hand, as necessary objects of exploitation for imperialism, the colonies have become a perpetual source of conflicts and wars between the imperialists, to an even higher degree than in the past. Wars, and new plans for wars, by individual imperialist States against various peoples which have remained more or less independent, as well as intensified preparations of the imperialist Powers for wars against each other for a new division of the colonies, continue without ceasing.

On the other hand, the vast colonial and semi-colonial world has become an unquenchable blazing furnace of the revolutionary mass movement. The basis of this phenomenon, which is of colossal historical importance, is furnished in part by changes which have taken place, during and after the imperialist world war, in the internal situation of the most important colonies and semi-colonies in their economic and social structure—e.g., the strengthening of the elements of capitalist and of industrial development, the intensification

of the agrarian crisis, the growth of the proletariat and the beginning of its organisation, the pauperisation of the mass of the peasantry, etc. In part also the basis is to be found in changes in the international situation; on the one hand, the difficulties encountered by the leading imperialist powers during the world war and in the post-war crisis of world capitalism, and afterwards, as a result of the imperialist "peace," the intensified rapacious aggressiveness of the colonial policy of Great Britain, Japan, the United States, France, Italy and Holland; on the other hand, the transformation of Russia from an imperialist into an anti-imperialist proletarian power, the victorious struggle of the peoples of the Soviet Union in defence of their independence, the example of the revolutionary solution of the national question in the Soviet Union and of the revolutionising influence of the work of building up socialism there, and furthermore, the strengthening of the communist movement in the capitalist countries and the activity of this movement in the defence of the colonies.

All these circumstances immeasurably accelerated the process of the political awakening of the vast human masses in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and led to a whole series of important revolutionary mass risings, in most cases, moreover, on the basis of a close-knit, characteristic association of the anti-imperialist emancipatory struggle with the development of the forces of internal class struggle.

## **The Chinese Revolution**

2. Of first-rate international importance was the Chinese revolution. The shooting down of the Chinese workers in Shanghai on May 30th, 1925, was the signal for the letting loose of a revolutionary wave until then unparalleled in China. The most important industrial centres of China—Shanghai, Tientsien, Hankow, Canton and the British colony of Hong Kong—were the arena of a mass revolutionary strike struggle which called forth an answering wave of mass peasant revolts against the Chinese landlords and gentry in the rural districts. Already, at this early stage of the wide national-revolutionary front,

the national bourgeoisie attempted to limit the revolutionary struggle exclusively to such national tasks as the fight against the imperialists and the anti-imperialist boycott. Almost simultaneously with the rise of the revolutionary wave, the counter-revolution began to organise its forces. (Chiang Kai Shek's *coup d'etat* in March, 1926, the firing on student demonstrations in Peking, the formation of a right group in the Kuomintang, the start of the struggle against the peasantry in Kwantung, the start of the struggle against the peasantry in Kwantung and Kwansi, etc.). The Northern Expedition, which began in the summer of 1926, the capture of a number of provinces and the defeat and disintegration of a whole series of reactionary militarist groups, were accompanied by an enormous growth of the mass movement (the seizure of the British concessions in Hankow and Kiukiang, the general strike in Shanghai, which developed into an armed insurrection, and the gigantic growth of the peasant movement.). The successful insurrection in Shanghai in April, 1927, posed the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in the national-revolutionary movement, finally impelled the native bourgeoisie into the camp of reaction and called forth the counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat* of Chiang Kai Shek.

The independent activity of the workers in the struggle for power, and above all the further growth of the peasant movement, which developed into agrarian revolution, impelled also the Wuhan Government, which had been established under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois wing of the Kuomintang, to go over to the camp of the counter-revolution. The revolutionary wave, however, was near to subsidence. In the course of a number of uprisings (the rising led by Ho-Lung and Ye-Ting, and the peasant uprisings in Hunan, Hupen, Kwantung and Kiangsu) the working class and peasantry still strove to tear the power from the hands of the imperialists, bourgeoisie and landlords, and in this way to avert the defeat of the revolution. But in this they were not successful. The last powerful onslaught of this

revolutionary wave was the insurrection of the heroic Canton proletariat, which under the slogan of Soviets attempted to link up the agrarian revolution with the overthrow of the Kuomintang and the establishment of the dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

### **The Indian Movement**

3. In India the policy of British imperialism, which sued to retard the development of native industry, evoked great dissatisfaction among the Indian bourgeoisie. The class consolidation of the latter which replaced its former division into religious sects and castes, and which was expressed in the fusion of the Indian National Congress (organ of the Indian bourgeoisie) with the Muslim League effected in 1916, confronted British imperialists with a national united front in the country. Fear of the revolutionary movement during the war compelled British imperialism to make concessions to the native bourgeoisie which found expression, in the economic sphere, in insignificant parliamentary reforms introduced in 1919. Nevertheless, a strong ferment, expressing itself in a series of revolutionary outbreaks against British imperialism, was produced among the masses of the Indian people as a result of the ruinous consequences of the imperialist war (famine and epidemics, 1918), the catastrophic deterioration of the position of wide sections of the working population, the influence of the October revolution in Russia and of a series of insurrections in various colonial countries (as, for example, the struggle of the Turkish people for independence). This first great anti-imperialist movement in India (1919-1922) ended in the betrayal of the cause of the national revolution by the Indian bourgeoisie, which in the main was caused by terror before the rising wave of peasant insurrections, and also by the workers' strikes against native employers. The collapse of the national-revolutionary movement and the gradual decline of bourgeois nationalism enabled British imperialism once more to return to a policy of hindering the industrial development of India. The recent measures of

British imperialism in India show that the objective contradictions between British colonial monopoly and the tendencies in the direction of the independent economic development of India are becoming more accentuated from year to year, and are leading to a new revolutionary crisis.

The real threat to British domination comes, not from the bourgeois camp, but from the growing mass movement of the Indian workers, which is developing in the form of large-scale strikes; at the same time the accentuation of the crisis in the village bears witness to the maturing of an agrarian revolution. All these phenomena are leading to a radical transformation of the whole political situation in India.

## **Indonesia**

4. In Indonesia Dutch imperialism is compelled in an ever-increasing degree to give its more powerful neighbours (American and British imperialism) the opportunity of importing foreign commodities and foreign capital into this colony. Thus Dutch imperialism itself in Indonesia is actually more and more compelled to play a subordinate role, as, so to say, that of a "commissionaire" who at the same time is compelled to perform the functions of a policeman and executioner. The immediate impulse to the insurrection which broke out in Java in November, 1926, was given by the economic crisis, and the resulting worsening of the conditions of the mass of the population, as well as by the cruel repression exercised by the Government against the national-revolutionary movement. To a considerable degree the rebellion was carried out under the leadership of the Communists. The Government succeeded in drowning the insurrection in blood, in suppressing the Communist Party, and in executing or throwing into prison thousands of the best leaders of the proletariat and peasantry. Insignificant reforms, instituted thereafter by the Government in order to weaken the hatred of the masses and to purchase the assistance of the national-reformist leaders for the work of "pacification" of the masses, have in no way improved the conditions of the working sections of the

people. The continuing economic crisis in the country, sepecially in the sugar and rubber industries, the capitalist offensive with the object of worsening the conditions of labour, and growing unemployment, create the objective pre-conditions for the inevitable new rising of the masses of workers and peasants against the ruling imperialism.

### **Northern Africa and Syria**

5. In North Africa in 1925 there began a series of rebellions of the Kabyle tribes of the Riff against French and Spanish imperialism, followed by the rebellions of the Druse tribes in the mandated territory of Syria against French imperialism. In Morocco the imperialists only succeeded in dealing with these rebellions after a prolonged war. The intensified penetration of foreign capital into these countries is already calling into life new social forces. The appearance and growth of an urban proletariat manifests itself in a wave of mass strikes that are, for the first time, sweeping over Palestine, Syria, Tunis and Algiers. Gradually, but very slowly, the peasantry also is being drawn into the struggle in these countries.

### **Latin America**

6. The growing economic and military expansion of North American imperialism in the countries of Latin America is transforming this continent into one of the most important meeting places of the antagonisms of the whole imperialist colonial system. The influence of Great Britain, which before the war was the decisive influence in these countries, and which reduced many of them to the position of semi-colonies, is being replaced since the war by a still greater dependence on the United States. By means of its increased export of capital, North American imperialism is conquering the commanding positions in the economy of these countries, subordinating their governments to its own financial control and at the same time swallowing them one after other. This aggressive policy of American imperialism is more and more taking on a character of undisguised violence, passing over



into armed intervention (e.g., Nicaragua). The national-emancipatory struggle against American imperialism which has begun in Latin America is taking place for the most part under the leadership of the petty-bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie, which represents a thin stratum of the population (with the exception of Argentine, Brazil and Chile), and which is connected, on the one hand, with the big landowners, and, on the other hand, with American capital, is in the camp of the counter-revolution.

The Mexican revolution which began as a revolutionary peasant struggle for land against the landowners and the church, at the same time to a considerable degree assumed the character of a mass struggle against American and British imperialism, and led to the formation of a government of the petty-bourgeoisie, which endeavoured to keep itself in power by means of concessions to the big landowners and to North American imperialism. The peasant risings, strikes of workers, etc., in Ecuador directed against the government of the landlords of the Guayaquil bankers and commercial bourgeoisie, ended in a military *coup d'état* and the establishment of a military dictatorship in 1925. The series of military revolutions in Chile, the guerrilla war in Nicaragua against North American imperialism, the series of risings in South Brazil, the uprising of the agricultural labourers in Patagonia and Argentine, the revolt of the Indians in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, the mutinies and spontaneous general strikes and mass demonstrations in Venezuela and Colombia, the mass anti-imperialist movement in Cuba and throughout the whole of Central America, Colombia, etc.—all these are events of the last few years which bear witness to the widening and deepening of the revolutionary process and, in particular, to the ever-growing popular indignation in the Latin American countries against world imperialism.

### **Contradictions of Imperialism**

7. In the majority of cases imperialism has up to now succeeded in bloody suppression of the revolutionary movement

in the colonial countries. But all the fundamental questions raised by these movements remain unsolved.

The objective contradiction between the colonial policy of world imperialism and the independent development of the colonial people is by no means done away with, neither in China, nor in India, nor in any other of the colonial and semi-colonial countries; on the contrary, the contradiction only becomes more acute and can be overcome only by the victorious revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses in the colonies. Until this contradiction is overcome it will continue to operate in every colony and semi-colony as one of the most powerful objective factors making for revolution. At the same time, the colonial policy of the imperialist Powers acts as a powerful stimulant to antagonisms and wars between these Powers. This antagonism is becoming more and more acute, especially in the semi-colonies, and notwithstanding the blocs that are frequently established between the imperialists, it plays a fairly important role. The greatest significance, however, for the development of the revolutionary movement in the colonies is borne by the contradictions between the imperialist world, on the one hand, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the revolutionary Labour movement in the capitalist countries on the other hand.

### **The Colonies and the Social Revolution**

8. The establishment of a fighting front between the active forces of the socialist world revolution (the Soviet Union and the revolutionary Labour movement in the capitalist countries) on the one side, and between the forces of imperialism on the other side, is of *fundamental importance* in the present epoch of world history. The toiling masses of the colonies struggling against imperialist slavery represent a most powerful auxiliary force of the socialist world revolution. The colonial countries at the present time constitute for world imperialism the most dangerous sector of their front. The revolutionary emancipatory movements of the colonies and semi-colonies more and more rally around the banner of the Soviet Union,

convincing themselves by bitter experience that there is no salvation for them except through alliance with the revolutionary proletariat, and through the victory of the world proletarian revolution over world imperialism. The proletariat of the U.S.S.R., and the workers' movement in the capitalist countries, headed by the Communist International, in their turn are supporting and will more and more effectively support in deeds the emancipatory struggle of all the colonial and other dependent peoples; they are the only sure bulwark of the colonial peoples in their struggle for final liberation from the yoke of imperialism. Furthermore, the alliance with the U.S.S.R. and with the revolutionary proletariat of the imperialist countries, creates for the toiling masses of the people of China, India, and all other colonial and semi-colonial countries, the possibility of an independent, free, economic and cultural development, *avoiding the stage of the domination of the capitalist system* or even the development of capitalist relations in general.

Thus, the whole perspective of development of the colonial people is bounded by a new framework in the epoch of imperialism, of wars and of revolution, an epoch in which is born the proletarian dictatorship. Since the analysis of contemporary world economy as a whole in no way leads to the perspective of a new prolonged period of flourishing capitalism, but, on the contrary, leads to the inevitability of the overthrow of capitalism, which has *already* fulfilled its progressive historical role, has already become a brake on further development, is already in process of disintegration (and giving place to the proletarian dictatorship, e.g., the U.S.S.R.), and is leading humanity to ever new catastrophes—all this denotes the presence of the objective possibility of a non-capitalist path of development for the backward colonies, the possibility of the "growing-over" of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the leading colonies into the proletarian socialist revolution with the aid of the victorious proletarian dictatorship in the other countries. Under favourable objective conditions this possibility is

converted into reality, whereby the true path of development is determined by *struggle* and by struggle alone. Consequently the theoretical and practical defence of this path, and the most self-sacrificing struggle for it, is the duty of all Communists. In connection with this perspective there arises before the colonies also the problem of revolutionary power on the basis of *Soviets*.

Thus all the basic questions of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies are found to have an immediate connection with the great epoch-making struggle between the capitalist and socialist systems—a struggle which at present is being conducted by imperialism against the U.S.S.R. on a world scale, and inside each separate capitalist country between bourgeois class rule and the Communist movement.

In this struggle the co-operation of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world and of the toiling masses of the colonies represent the surest guarantee of victory over imperialism. In this struggle every conflict between two imperialist States and war of the imperialists against the U.S.S.R., must be utilised in the colonies for the mobilisation of the masses and for drawing them into a decisive struggle against imperialism, for national emancipation and for the victory of the workers and peasants.

## **II. The Characteristic Features of Colonial Economics and of Imperialist Colonial Policy**

### **Effects of Imperialism in the Colonies**

9. The recent history of the colonies can only be understood if it is looked upon as an organic constituent part of the development of capitalist world economy as a whole, beginning with its earliest forms and ending with its latest stage, viz., imperialism.

In proportion as capitalism more and more strongly draws the immense colonial areas into the sphere of its world economy based on exploitation and profit-hunting,

there is seen, reflected as in a mirror, in the economic and political history of the colonial and semi-colonial countries all the characteristic features of the so-called "civilising" and cultural mission of the capitalist mode of production and of the bourgeois social order. In particular, it reveals with merciless accuracy all the methods and practices of "primary capitalist accumulation." Its policy of conquest and oppression, unsurpassed in cruelty, bound up as it has been with colonial robbery and punitive expeditions, with opium wars and piratical raids for the compulsory provision of the native populations with Bibles, whisky and other trash, as conducted by the most Christian countries of Europe and America, was one of the most important factors which hastened the consolidation of the capitalist structure.

In spite of the disgusting lies of the imperialists and of their reformist lackeys (MacDonald, Otto Bauer and Co.), who maintain that imperialism "educates the backward races for prosperity, progress and culture," the transition to the epoch of monopolist capitalism in no way lightened the yoke weighing upon the many millions of the mass of humanity in the colonial countries. The devastating consequences everywhere brought about by capitalist development, in particular in the first stage of its existence, are reproduced in the colonies to a monstrous degree and at an accelerated rate, owing to the penetration of foreign capital. The progressive results of capitalism, on the other hand, are, for the most part, completely lacking in the colonies. Where in the colonies the ruling imperialism is in need of social support, it first of all allies itself with the ruling strata of the previous social structure, with the feudal lords and with the trading and money-lending bourgeoisie, against the majority of the people. Everywhere imperialism attempts to preserve and to perpetuate all those pre-capitalist forms of exploiting (especially in the villages) which serve as the basis for the existence of its reactionary allies. The mass of the people in these countries are compelled to pay out enormous sums for the upkeep of the military, police and administrative

apparatus of the colonial regime. The growth of famines and epidemics, particularly among the pauperised peasantry, the mass expropriation of the land of the native population, the inhuman conditions of labour (on the plantations and mines of the white capitalists, and so on), which at times are worse than open slavery—all this exerts its devastating effect on the colonial population and not infrequently leads to the dying out of whole nationalities. The “cultural role” of the imperialist States in the colonies is in reality expressed in the role of an executioner.

### **The Dominions**

10. In the colonial countries it is necessary to distinguish between those colonies of the capitalist countries which have served them as colonising regions for their surplus population, and which in this way have become a continuation of their capitalist system (Australia, Canada, etc.), and those colonies which are exploited by the imperialists primarily as markets for their commodities, as sources of raw material and as spheres for the export of capital. This distinction has not only a historic but also a great economic and political significance. The colonies of the first type on the basis of their general development, became “Dominions,” that is, members of the given imperialist system with equal, or nearly equal, rights. Capitalist development reproduces among the white population the class structure of the metropolis,\* while native population was, for the most part, exterminated. There cannot be there any talk of the colonial regime in the form that it shows itself in the colonies of the second type. Between these two types is to be found a transitional type (in various forms) where, alongside the numerous native population, there exists a very considerable population of white colonists (South Africa, New Zealand, Algiers, etc.). The bourgeoisie, which has come from the metropolis, in essence represents in these countries (emigrant colonies) nothing else than a colonial extension of the bourgeoisie of the metropolis. The interests of this

\* The imperial centre—the “mother country”

bourgeoisie coincide to a considerable degree with the colonial interests of the metropolis. The metropolis is interested to a certain extent in the strengthening of its capitalist subsidiary in the colonies, in particular when this subsidiary of imperialism is successful in enslaving the original native population or even in completely destroying it. On the other hand, the competition between various imperialist systems for influence in the semi-independent countries can lead also to their breaking off from the metropolis and even to a union with the competitors of the latter. These reasons frequently compel imperialism to reconcile itself to a certain political and economic independence of its agencies in such colonies (Dominions), which arise on the basis of its united and native strength in relation to the corresponding imperialism.

### **Parasitic Nature of Imperialism**

11. The imperialist colonial regime is essentially based not only on economic pressure but also on the extra-economic compulsion of the monopoly of the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries in the corresponding dependent countries. This monopoly, however, expresses itself in two basic functions: on the one hand it serves the purpose of merciless exploitation of the colony (various forms of immediate and indirect exaction of tribute, super-profits in connection with the sale of its own industrial goods, with the obtaining of cheap raw material for its own industry and with the utilisation of very cheap labour power, etc.); on the other hand, the imperialist monopoly serves for the preservation and development of the conditions of its own existence, the functions of *enslavement* of the colonial masses.

In its function as colonial exploiter, the ruling imperialism in relation to the colonial country acts primarily as a parasite sucking the blood from the economic organism of the latter. The fact that this parasite in relation to its victim represents a society with a highly developed culture makes it a so much the more powerful and dangerous exploiter, but, from the point

of view of the colonial country, this in no way alters the parasitic character of its function. Capitalist exploitation in every imperialist country has proceeded by way of the development of productive forces. The specific colonial forms of capitalist exploitation, put into operation by the same British, French or any other bourgeoisie, in the final analysis hinder the development of the productive forces of the colonies concerned. The carrying through of the minimum of constructive activity (railways, harbours, etc.) is indispensable both for military domination in the country and for guaranteeing the uninterrupted activity of the taxation machine, as well as for the trading needs of the imperialist countries. Agriculture in the colonies is compelled to a considerable degree to work for export, but peasant economy is thereby no means liberated from the oppression of its pre-capitalist features. As a general rule it is converted to a "free" trading economy by means of the subordination of the pre-capitalist forms of production to the needs of finance-capital, the deepening of pre-capitalist methods of exploitation through subjection of peasant economy to the yoke of rapidly developing trade and usury capital, the increase of tax burdens, etc. The exploitation of the peasantry is increased, but the productive methods of the latter are not improved. As a general rule, the industrial working up of the colonial raw material is not carried out in the colonies themselves, but in the capitalist countries, and primarily in the metropolis. The profits obtained in the colonies are, for the most part, not expended productively, but are sucked out of the country and are invested either in the metropolis or in new spheres of expansion on the part of the imperialism concerned. Thus the fundamental tendency of colonial exploitation acts in the direction of hindering the development of the productive forces in the colonies, of despoiling them of their natural riches, and, above all, of exhausting the reserves of human productive forces in the colonial countries.

### **Development Hindered By Imperialism**

12. In as much, however, as colonial exploitation presupposes



a certain encouragement of the development of production in the colonies this development, thanks to the imperialist monopoly, is directed on such lines and accelerated only in such a degree as corresponds to the interests of the metropolis, and, in particular, to the interests of the preservation of its colonial monopoly. It may cause a part of the peasantry, for example, to pass over from grain (Sudan, Cuba, Java, Egypt), but this takes place in such a way and by such means that it not only on no way corresponds to the interests of the independent economic development of the colonial country, but, on the contrary, still further strengthens the dependence of the latter on the imperialist metropolis. With the object of widening the raw material base for world imperialism, there are created new agricultural crops in the place of those destroyed by colonial policy. New systems of irrigation are constructed with the same object in view in the place of the old ones that have been destroyed, and become in the hands of the imperialists a weapon for increasing the exploitation of the peasantry. With a view to widening the internal market, attempts are undertaken to adapt to the capitalist mode of production that agrarian relationships which are partly created by colonial policy itself. Plantations of various kinds serve the interest of metropolitan finance capital. The exploitation of the mineral wealth of the colonies is conducted in accordance with the needs of the metropolitan industry, especially its need to put an end to dependence on sources of raw materials in other countries to which the monopoly of this imperialism does not extend.

These are the main spheres of colonial production. Only where manufacture constitutes a very simple process (tobacco industry, sugar refineries, etc.) or where the expense of transporting raw material can be considerably decreased by the first stage of manufacture being performed on the spot, does the development of production in the colonies attain comparatively large dimensions. In any case, the capitalist enterprises created by the imperialists in the colonies (with the exception of a few enterprises established in case of

military needs) are predominantly or exclusively of an agrarian-capitalist character, and are distinguished by a low organic composition of capital. Real industrialisation of the colonial country, in particular the building up of a flourishing engineering industry, which might make possible the independent development of the productive forces of the country, is not accelerated, but, on the contrary, is hindered by the metropolis. *This is the essence of its function of colonial enslavement* : the colonial country is compelled to sacrifice the interest of its independent development and to play the part of an economic (agrarian raw material) appendage to foreign capitalism, which, at the expense of the labouring classes of the colonial country, strengthens the economic and political power of the imperialist bourgeoisie in order to perpetuate the monopoly of the latter in the colonies and to increase its expansion as compared with the rest of the world.

Just as the "classical capitalism" of the pre-imperialist epoch most clearly demonstrated its negative features of destruction of the old without an equivalent creation of the new precisely in its policy of plunder in the colonies, so also the most characteristic side of the decay of imperialism, its essential feature of usury and parasitism, is especially clearly revealed in its colonial economy. The endeavour of the great imperialist powers to adapt to an ever-increasing degree their monopolised colonies to the needs of the capitalist economy of the metropolis, not only evokes the destruction of the traditional economic structure of the indigenous colonial population, but, side by side with this, leads to the destruction of the equilibrium between separate branches of production, and, in the final analysis, leads to an artificial retardation of the development of the productive forces in the colonies.

A general tendency on the part of all the metropolitan centres is the endeavour to draw the colony into, and make it a subordinate constituent part of the particular imperialist system concerned, in order to guarantee the latter's economic supremacy, and so as to be able, on the one hand, to maintain

it in opposition to other imperialist systems, and, on the other hand, to cut off the colony from immediate relations with world economy as a whole, and to keep to themselves the function of intermediary and supreme regulator in all its economic relations with the outer world. This tendency of the imperialists to strengthen the one sided dependence of the colonies leads to growth of competition between the different imperialist Powers and international trusts, etc.

As conditioned by these circumstances, the development of capitalist relationships and of the exploitation of the masses of the people in the colonies assumes very varied forms.

### **Impoverishment of the Peasantry**

13. In as much as the overwhelming mass of the colonial population is connected with land and lives in the villages, the plundering character of the forms of exploitation of the peasantry made use of by imperialism and its allies (the class of landowners and trading -usury capital) acquires a specially important significance. Owing to the interference of imperialism (imposition of taxation, import of industrial wars from the metropolis, etc.) the drawing of the village into the sphere of monetary and trading economy is accompanied here by a process of pauperisation of the peasantry, destruction of village handicraft industry, etc., and proceeds at a much more rapid rate than was the case when the same process took place in the leading capitalist countries. On the other hand, the delayed industrial development in the colonies has put sharp limits to the process of proletarianisation. This enormous disproportion between the rapid rate of destruction of the old forms of economy and the slow development of the new has given rise in China, India, Indonesia, Egypt, etc., to an extraordinary "pressure on agriculture," and to agrarian immigration, rack-renting and extreme fragmentation of the land cultivated by the peasantry. At the same time, the whole burden of the previous feudal or semi-feudal conditions of exploitation and bondage, in somewhat "modernised," but in no way lighter, forms, lies as before on the shoulders of the peasantry.

Capitalism, which has included the colonial village into its system of taxation and trade apparatus, and which has overturned pre-capitalist relations. (for instance, the destruction of the village commune), does not thereby liberate peasants from the yoke of pre-capitalist forms of bondage and exploitation, but only gives the latter a monetary expression (feudal services and rent in kind are partially replaced by money rent, while payment of taxes in kind is replaced by money taxes, and so on), which still more increases the suffering of the peasantry. To the "assistance" of the peasants in their miserable position comes the usurer, robbing them and under certain conditions (e.g., in some localities of India and China) even creating a hereditary slavery based on their indebtedness.

Notwithstanding the great variety of agrarian relationships in different colonial countries, and even in different parts of one and the same country, the poverty-stricken position of the peasant masses is almost everywhere the same. Partly owing to unequal exchange, and partly to direct exploitation, the peasants in these countries are not in a position to raise the technical or organisational level of their economy. The productivity of their labour, as also the demand for it, is falling. The pauperisation of the peasantry in these countries is a general phenomenon. In India, China and Indonesia the pauperisation of the peasantry has reached such a height that, at the present time, the most characteristic figure in the village is the poor peasant, almost or entirely deprived of land and not infrequently suffering starvation. Big landownership is here hardly connected in any way with large-scale agriculture, but serves only as a means for extorting rents from the peasants. There is frequently to be found a hierarchy of many stages, consisting of landlords and sub-landlords, parasitic intermediate links between the labouring cultivator and the big landowner (zemindar) or the State. The ancient systems of artificial irrigation, which in these countries is of great importance for agriculture, thanks to the interference of imperialism, first of all fell into decay, and

when later they were re-established on a capitalist basis, then they were found to be too dear for the peasants to make use of. Famines became a more and more frequent occurrence. The peasant finds himself completely helpless in the face of epidemics and various kinds of elemental misfortune. Wide masses of the peasantry are thrown out of the process of production; they have no chances of finding work in the towns and rarely find work in the village, where they develop into miserable coolies.

This poverty-stricken position of the peasantry denotes at the same time a crisis in the internal market for industry, which in its turn represents a powerful obstacle to the capitalist development of the country. Not only the national bourgeoisie of India, China, Egypt, etc., but also imperialism itself is sensible of this peasant misery as an obstacle in the path of the expansion of their exploitation; but the economic and political interests of both of them are so closely bound up with large ownership, as also with trading and usury capital in the village, that they are not in a position to carry through an agrarian reform of any wide significance.

Peasant domestic production and artisan production becomes more and more disintegrated. The development of trade creates an important stratum of native trading bourgeoisie, which fulfils also the functions of purchasing agent, usurer, etc. The predominance and hegemony of trading and usury capital, in the specific conditions of colonial economy, delays the growth of industrial capital. In the struggle for the internal market, national capital again and again meets with the competition of imported foreign capital in the colonial country itself and the retarding influence of pre-capitalist relations in the villages. In spite of these obstacles, there does arise in certain branches of production a native large-scale industry (chiefly light industry). National capital and national banks come into being and begin to develop.

The pitiful attempts at carrying through agrarian reforms without damaging the colonial regime are intended to facilitate the gradual conversion of semi-feudal landownership

into capitalist landlordism, and in certain cases to establish a narrow stratum of kulak peasants. In practice this only leads to an ever increasing pauperisation of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, which again, in its turn paralyses the development of the internal market. It is on the basis of these contradictory economic processes that the most important social forces of the colonial movement have their development.

### **The Role of Finance Capital**

14. In the period of imperialism there stands out with especial prominence the role of finance capital in the seizure of economic and political monopoly in the colonies. This especially finds expression in definite economic consequences resulting from the export of capital to the colonies. The exported capital here flows predominantly into the sphere of trade, it functions mainly as usurious loan capital and it pursues the task of preserving and strengthening the oppressive apparatus of the imperialist State in the colonial country (by the aid of State loans, etc.), or of achieving full control over the so-called independent State organs of the native bourgeoisie in the colonial countries.

The export of capital to the colonies hastens the development in them of capitalist relation. A portion of the exported capital, despatched to the colony for productive purposes, does in part conduce to an acceleration of industrial development; by no means, however, in the direction of independence, but rather in a direction which strengthens the dependence of colonial economy on the finance capital of the imperialist country. In general, imported capital is concentrated in the colonies almost exclusively for the extraction and supply of raw materials, or for the first stages of their utilisation. Exported capital is used also for extending the system of communication (railways, ship-building, harbour works, etc.), thus facilitating the transport of raw material and binding the colonies more closely to the metropolis. A favourite form of investment of capital

in agriculture is in large plantations, with the object of cheap production of food products and the monopolisation of vast sources of raw material. The transference to the metropolis of the greater portion of the surplus value extorted from the cheap labour power of the colonial slaves retards to a correspondingly enormous degree the upward growth of the economy of the colonial countries and the development of their productive forces, and serves as an obstacle to the economic and political emancipation of the colonies.

Another basic feature in the mutual relations between the capitalist States and the colonial countries is the endeavour of various monopolist groups of finance capital to monopolise the whole external trade of the separate colonial and semi-colonial countries, and in this way to subordinate to their control and regulation all the channels which connect the colonial economy with the world market. The direct influence of this monopolisation of external trade by a few monopolist exporting firms on the course of capitalist development in the colonies is expressed, not so much in the development of a national internal market, as in the adaptation of the scattered internal colonial trade to the needs of export, and in the "bleeding" of the national wealth of the colonial countries by the imperialist parasites. This peculiar development of colonial trade finds its specific expression also in the form and character of the imperialist banks in the colonies, which mobilise the savings of the native bourgeoisie chiefly for financing the foreign trade of the colonies, etc.

### **Imperialist Economic Policy**

15. The entire economic policy of imperialism in relation to the colonies is determined by its endeavour to preserve and increase their dependence, to deepen their exploitation and, as far as possible, to impede their independent development. Only under the pressure of special circumstances may the bourgeoisie of the imperialist States find itself compelled to co-operate in the development of big industry in the colonies.

Thus, for example, requirements for preparation or conduct of war may, to a limited extent, lead to the creation of various enterprises in engineering and chemical industry in certain of the most strategically important colonies (e.g., India). Competition on the part of more powerful competitors may compel the metropolis to grant definite concessions in matters of tariff policy, in which case it safeguards itself by means of preferential duties.

With the object of buying up definite strata of the bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, especially in periods of a rising revolutionary movement, the metropolis may, to a certain degree, weaken its economic pressure. But, in the measure that these extraordinary and, for the most part, extra-economic circumstances lose their influence, the economic policy of the imperialist powers is immediately directed towards repressing and retarding the economic development of the colonies. Consequently the development of the national economy of the colonies, and especially their industrialisation, the all-round independent development of their industry can only be realised in the strongest contradiction to the policy of imperialism. Thus the specific character of the development of the colonial countries is especially expressed in the fact that the growth of productive forces is realised with extreme difficulty, spasmodically, artificially, being limited to individual branches of industry.

The inevitable result of this is that the pressure of imperialism on the colonial and semi-colonial countries is reproduced each time in a higher degree and evokes an ever more powerful resistance on the part of the social-economic factors originating from imperialism itself. The continual hindrance to independent development more and more deepens the antagonism of the colonial peoples in relation to imperialism and leads to revolutionary crises, boycott movements, nationalist revolutionary insurrections, etc.

On the one hand, the imminent objective contradictions in the capitalist development of the colonies become strengthened, which itself deepens the contradictions between the



independent development of the colonies and the interests of the bourgeoisie of the imperialist States; on the other hand, the new capitalist forms of exploitation bring into the arena a genuine revolutionary force—the proletariat, around which the many millions of the peasant masses rally more and more strongly in order to offer organised resistance to the yoke of finance capital.

All the chatter of the imperialists and their lackeys about the policy of decolonisation being carried through by the imperialist Powers, about co-operation in “free development of the colonies”, reveals itself as nothing but an imperialist lie. It is of the utmost importance that Communists, both in the imperialist and in the colonial countries, should completely expose this lie.

### **III. Communist Strategy and Tactics in China and Similar Colonial Countries**

#### **Tasks of The Democratic Revolution**

16. As in all colonies and semi-colonies, so also in China and India the development of productive forces and the socialisation of labour stands at a comparatively low level. This circumstance, together with the fact of foreign domination and also the presence of powerful relics of feudalism and pre-capitalist relations, determines the character of the immediate stage of the revolution in these countries. In the revolutionary movement in these countries we have to deal with the *bourgeois democratic revolution*, i.e., of the stage signifying preparing of the prerequisites for proletarian dictatorship and socialist revolution. Corresponding to this, the following kinds of tasks can be pointed out, which may be considered as general basic tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies :

(a) A shifting in the relationship of forces in favour of the proletariat : emancipation of the country from the yoke of imperialism (nationalisation of foreign concessions, railways, banks, etc.), and the establishment of the national

unity of the country where this has not yet been attained: overthrow of the power of the exploiting classes at the back of which imperialism stands : organisation of Soviets of workers and peasants : establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry : consolidation of the hegemony of the proletariat.

(b) The carrying through of the agrarian revolution : emancipation of the peasants from all pre-capitalist and colonial conditions of exploitation and bondage; nationalisation of the land; radical measures for alleviating the position of the peasantry with the object of establishing the closest possible economic and political union between the town and village.

(c) In correspondence with the further development of industry, transport, etc., and with the accompanying growth of the proletariat, the widespread development of trade union organisations of the working class, strengthening of the Communist Party and its conquest of a firm leading position among the toiling masses : the achievement of the eight-hour day.

(d) Establishment of equal rights for nationalities and of sex equality (equal rights for women) : separation of the church from the State and the abolition of caste distinction : political education and raising of the general cultural level of the masses in town and country, etc.

How far the bourgeois-democratic revolution will be able in practice to realise all its basic tasks, and how far it will be the case that part of these tasks will be carried into effect only by the socialist revolution, will depend on the course of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and its successes or defeats in the struggles against the imperialists, feudal lords and the bourgeoisie. In particular, the emancipation of the colony from the imperialist yoke is facilitated by the development of the socialist revolution in the capitalist world, and can only be completely guaranteed by the victory of the proletariat in the leading capitalist countries. The transition of the revolution to a socialist phase

demands the presence of certain minimum prerequisites, as, for example, a certain definite level of development in the country of industry, of trade union organisations of the proletariat and of a strong Communist Party. The most important is precisely the development of a strong Communist Party with a big mass influence, which would be in the highest degree a slow and difficult process *were it not accelerated by the bourgeois-democratic revolution which already grows and develops as a result of the objective conditions in these countries.*

### **Character of Colonial Democratic Revolution**

17 The bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonies is distinguished from the bourgeois democratic revolution in an independent country chiefly in that it is organically bound up with the national-emancipatory struggle against imperialist domination. The national factor exerts considerable influence on the revolutionary process in all colonies, as well as in those semi-colonies where imperialist enslavement already appears in its naked form, leading to the revolt of the mass of the people. On the one hand, national oppression hastens the ripening of the revolutionary classes, strengthens the dissatisfaction of the masses of workers and peasants, facilitates their mobilisation and endows the revolutionary mass revolts with the elemental force and character of a genuine popular revolution. On the other hand, the national factor is able to influence not only the movement of the working class and peasantry, but also the attitude of all the remaining classes, modifying its form during the process of revolution. Above all, the poor urban petty-bourgeoisie, together with the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, is during the first period to a very considerable extent brought under the influence of the active revolutionary forces; secondly, the position of the colonial bourgeoisie in the bourgeois-democratic revolution is still for the most part an ambiguous one, and its vacillations in accordance with the course of the revolution are even more considerable than in the bourgeoisie of an independent country

(e.g., the Russian bourgeoisie in 1905-17). It is very important, in accordance with the concrete circumstances, to investigate very carefully the special influence of the national factor, which to a considerable degree determines the special character of the colonial revolution, and to take it into account in the tactics of the Communist Party concerned.

Along with the national-emancipatory struggle, the *agrarian revolution* constitutes the axis of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the chief colonial countries. Consequently Communists must follow with the greatest attention the development of the agrarian crisis and the intensification of class contradictions in the village, they must from the very beginning give a consciously-revolutionary direction to the dissatisfaction of the workers and to the incipient peasant movement, directing it against imperialist exploitation and bondage, as also against the yoke of the various pre-capitalist (feudal and semi-feudal) relationships as a result of which peasant economy is suffering, disintegrating and perishing. The incredible backwardness of agriculture, the prevalence of oppressive rent relations and the oppression of trading-usury capital, represent the greatest hindrance to the development of productive forces in village economy in the colonies, and stand in monstrous contradiction with the highly organised forms of exchange between the village agricultural production of the colonies and the world market created by monopoly imperialism.

### **Attitude of the National Bourgeoisie**

18. The national *bourgeoisie* in these colonial countries does not adopt a uniform attitude in relation to imperialism. A part of this bourgeoisie, more especially the trading bourgeoisie, directly serves the interests of imperialist capital (the so-called *compradore*\* bourgeoisie). In general, it more or less consistently defends the anti-national imperialist point of

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\* Native merchants, engaged in trade with imperialist centres, whose interests are in continuation of imperialist exploitation. They act as agents for exploiting the masses in the colonial countries.

view directed against the whole nationalist movement, in common with the feudal allies of imperialism and the more highly paid native officials. The remaining portions of the native bourgeoisie, especially the portion reflecting the interests of native industry, support the national movement and represent a special vacillating compromising tendency which may be designated as *national reformism* (or, in the terminology of the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International, a "bourgeois-democratic" tendency). This intermediate position of the national bourgeoisie between the revolutionary and imperialist camps is no longer to be observed, it is true, in China after 1925; there the greater part of the national bourgeoisie from the begining, owing to the special situation, took the leadership in the national-emancipatory war; later on it passed over finally into the camp of counter-revolution. In India and Egypt we still observe, for the time being, the typical bourgeoisie-nationalist movement—an opportunist movement, subject to great vacillations, *balancing between imperialism and revolution*.

The independence of the country in relation to imperialism, being to the advantage of the whole colonial people, corresponds also to the interests of the national bourgeoisie, but is in irreconcilable contradiction to the whole essence of the imperialist system. Various native capitalists, it is true; are by their immediate interests to a great extent bound by numerous threads to imperialist capital. Imperialism is able directly to buy up a considerable portion of them (it may be even a greater portion than heretofore), and to create a definite *compradore* position, a position of intermediary trader, sub-exploiter or overseer over the enslaved population. But the position of slave owner, of monopolist supreme exploiter, imperialism reserves for itself alone. Independent rule, a future of "free" independent capitalist development, hegemony over an "independent" people—this imperialism will never voluntarily yield to the national bourgeoisie. In this respect the contradiction of interests between the national bourgeoisie of the colonial country and imperialism is

objectively of a radical character. In this respect imperialism demands *capitulation* on the part of the national bourgeoisie

The native bourgeoisie, as the weaker side, again and again capitulates to imperialism. Its capitulation, however, is not final as long as the danger of *class revolution* on the part of the masses has not become immediate, acute and menacing. In order, on the one hand, to avoid this danger, and, on the other hand, to strengthen its position in relation to imperialism, bourgeois nationalism in these colonies strives to obtain the support of the petty-bourgeoisie, and in part also of the working class. Since, in relation to the working class, it has little prospect of success (as soon as the working class in these countries has at all begun to awake politically), it becomes the more important for it to obtain support from the peasantry. But just here is the weakest point of the colonial bourgeoisie. The unbearable exploitation of the colonial peasantry can only be put an end to by the way of the agrarian revolution. The bourgeoisie of China, India and Egypt is by its immediate interests, so closely bound up with landlordism, with usury, capital and with the exploitation of the peasant masses in general, that it takes its stand not only against the agrarian revolution but also against every decisive agrarian reform. It is afraid, and not without foundation, that even the mere open formulation of the agrarian question will stimulate and accelerate the growth of the process of revolutionary fermentation in the peasant masses. Thus the reformist bourgeoisie hardly dares to decide to approach practically this basic urgent question.

Instead it attempts by means of empty nationalist phrases and gestures to keep the petty-bourgeois masses under its influence and to induce imperialism to grant certain concessions. But the imperialists draw the reins over tighter, and the national bourgeoisie is incapable of offering any serious resistance. Accordingly, the national bourgeoisie in every conflict with imperialism attempts, on the one hand, to make a great show of its nationalist "firmness" of principle, and, on the other hand, it sows illusions as to the possibility of

a peaceful compromise with imperialism. Through both, the one and the other, the masses inevitably become disillusioned, and in this way they gradually outlive their reformist illusions.

### **Proletarian Leadership in Colonial Emancipation**

19. An incorrect estimation of the basic national-reformist tendency of the national bourgeoisie in these colonial countries gives rise to the possibility of serious errors in the strategy and tactics of the Communist Parties concerned. In particular two kinds of mistakes are possible :

(a) A non-understanding of the difference between the national-reformist and national-revolutionary tendency can lead to a "khvostist"\* policy in relation to the bourgeoisie, to an insufficiently accurate political and organisational delimitation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie, and to the blurring of the chief revolutionary slogans (especially the slogans of the agrarian revolution), etc. This was the fundamental mistake into which the Communist Party of China fell in 1925-27.

(b) An under-estimation of the special significance which the bourgeois national-reformist, as distinct from the feudal-imperialist camp, possesses, owing to its mass influence on the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie, peasantry and even a portion of the working class, at least in the first stages of the movement, may lead to a sectarian policy and to the isolation of the Communists from the toiling masses.

In both these cases insufficient attention is given to the realisation of precisely those tasks which the Second Congress of the Communist International had already characterised as the basic tasks of the Communist Parties in the colonial countries, i.e., the tasks of struggle against the bourgeois-democratic movement inside the nation itself. Without this struggle, without the liberation of the toiling masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie and of national-reformism, the

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\* Khvost equals "tail". Following behind events in policy rather than leading

basic strategical aim of the Communist movement in the bourgeois-democratic revolution—the *hegemony of the proletariat*—cannot be achieved. Without the hegemony of the proletariat, an organic part of which is the *leading role of the Communist Party*, the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be carried through to an end, not to speak of the socialist revolution.

### **Role of The Petty-Bourgeoisie and Peasantry**

20. The petty-bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries plays a very important role. It consists of various strata, which in different periods of the national-revolutionary movement play very diverse roles. The *artisan*, who is hit by the competition of foreign imported goods, is hostilely disposed towards imperialism. At the same time he is interested in the unlimited exploitation of his journeymen and apprentices, and accordingly he is hostilely disposed towards the class-conscious Labour movement. At the same time, also, he usually suffers himself from the exploitation of trading and usury capital. The exceedingly ambiguous and hopeless position of this stratum of the petty-bourgeoisie determines its vacillations, and it frequently falls under the influence of utopian reactionaries. The small trader—both in town and village—is connected with village exploitation through usury and trade, and he clings to the old forms of exploitation in preference to the prospects of an expansion of the internal market. These strata, however, are not homogeneous. These sections of the trading bourgeoisie, which in one form or another are connected with the *compradores*, occupy a different position from those sections the activity of which is limited mainly to the internal market.

The petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, the students and such-like, are very frequently the most determined representatives, not only of the specific interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, but also of the general objective interests of the entire national bourgeoisie, and, in the first period of the national movement, they often come out as the spokesmen of the nationalist



struggle. Their role on the surface of the movement is comparatively important. In general they cannot act as representatives of peasant interests, for the very social strata from which they come are time and again connected with landlordism. The upward growth of the revolutionary wave may drive them into the Labour movement, bringing with them their petty-bourgeois ideology of vacillation and indecision. Only a few of them in the course of the struggle are able to break with their own class and rise to an understanding of the tasks of the class struggle of the proletariat, and to become active defenders of the interests of the latter. It frequently happens that the petty-bourgeois intellectuals give to their ideology a socialist or even Communist colour. In the struggle against imperialism they have played, and in such countries as India and Egypt they even now still partially play a revolutionary role. The mass movement may draw them after it, but it may also push them into the camp of extreme reaction or, at least, cause the spread of utopian reactionary tendencies in their ranks.

Alongside of these strata there is to be found in the colonial towns considerable sections of *urban poor*, the position of which objectively drives them to the support of revolution—artisans who do not exploit the labour of others, street traders, unemployed intellectuals, ruined peasants seeking work, etc. Further, the colonial town, as also the village, has a populous section of “coolies,” semi-proletarians who have not passed through the school of factory production and who live by casual labour.

The *peasantry*, along with the proletariat and in the character of its ally, represents a driving force of the revolution. The immense many-millioned peasant mass constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population even in the most developed colonies (in some colonies it is 90 per cent of the population). The many millions of starving tenant-cultivators, petty-peasants oppressed by want and groaning under all kinds of pre-capitalist and capitalist forms of exploitation, a considerable portion of them deprived of the possibility of

cultivation even on the lands that they rent, thrown out from the process of production and slowly dying from famine and disease, village agricultural labourers—all these allies of the proletariat in the village. The peasantry can only achieve its emancipation under the leadership of the proletariat, but the proletariat can only lead the bourgeois-democratic revolution to victory in union with the peasantry. The process of class differentiation of the peasantry, in the colonies and semi-colonies which possess important relics of feudalism and of precapitalist relationships, proceeds at a comparatively slow rate. Nevertheless, market relationships in these countries have developed to such a degree that the peasantry already no longer represent a homogeneous mass, as far as their class relations are concerned. In the villages of China and India, in particular in certain parts of these countries, it is already possible to find exploiting elements derived from the peasantry, who exploit the peasants and village labourers through usury, trade, employment of hired labour, the sale or letting out of land on rent, the loaning of cattle or agricultural implements, etc. In general, it is possible that, in the first period of the struggle of the peasantry against the landlords, the proletariat may be able to carry with it the entire peasantry. But in the further development of the struggle some of the upper strata of the peasantry may pass into the camp of counter-revolution. The proletariat can achieve its leading role in relation to the peasantry only under the conditions of unflinching struggle for its partial demands, for complete carrying through of the agrarian revolution, and only if it will lead the struggle of the wide masses of the peasantry for a revolutionary settlement of the agrarian question.

### **The Working Class**

21. The *working class* in the colonies and semi-colonies has characteristic features which play an important role in the building up of an independent working-class movement and proletarian class ideology in these countries. The predominant part of the colonial proletariat is derived from the pauperised

village, with which the worker remains in connection even when engaged in production. In the majority of colonies (with the exception of some large factory towns such as Shanghai, Bombay, Calcutta, etc.) we find, as a general rule, only a first generation of proletarians engaged in large-scale production. Another portion is made up of the ruined artisans who are being driven out of the decaying handicrafts, which are widely spread even in the foremost colonies. The ruined artisan, a petty owner, carries with him into the working class a guild tendency and ideology which serves as a basis for the penetration of national-reformist influence into the Labour movement of the colonies. The mobile composition of the proletariat (frequent renewal of the labour force in the factories owing to workers returning to the village and the inflow of new masses of poverty-stricken peasants into production); the considerable percentage of women and children, the numerous different languages, illiteracy, the wide distribution of religious and cast prejudices—all make difficult the work of systematic agitation and propaganda and retard the growth of class-consciousness among the workers. Nevertheless, the merciless exploitation, practised in the most oppressive forms by native and foreign capital, and the entire absence of political rights for the workers, create the objective preconditions on the basis of which the Labour movement in the colonies is rapidly overcoming all obstacles, and every year draws greater and greater masses of the working class into the struggle against the native exploiters and the imperialists.

The first period of the growth of the Labour movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries (approximately 1919-1923) is organically bound up with the general growth of the national-revolutionary movement which followed the world war, and which was characterised by the subordination of the class interests of the working class to the interests of the anti-imperialist struggle headed by the native bourgeoisie. In so far as the Labour strikes and other demonstrations bore an organisational character, they were usually organised by petty-bourgeois intellectuals who restricted the demands of the

workers to questions of the national struggle. The most important characteristic of the second period of rapid growth of the Labour movement in the colonies, on the other hand, the period which began after the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, was the emergence of the working class of the colonies into the political arena as an independent class force directly opposing itself to the national bourgeoisie, and entering upon a struggle with the latter in defence of its own immediate class interests, and for hegemony in the national revolution as a whole. The history of the last few years has clearly confirmed this characteristic of the new stage of the colonial revolution, first of all in the example of the great Chinese revolution, and subsequently in the insurrection in Indonesia. There is every ground to believe that in India the working class is liberating itself from the influence of the nationalist and social-reformist leaders, and is being converted into an independent political factor in the struggle against the British imperialists and the native bourgeoisie.

### **Tasks of The Communists**

22. In order to correctly determine the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement it is important as a starting-point to take into consideration the *degree of maturity* attained by the movement in the separate colonial countries. The revolutionary movement in China is distinguished from the present movement in India by a series of essential features, characterising the different degrees of maturity of the movement in the two countries. The previous experience of the Chinese revolution must undoubtedly be utilised in the revolutionary movement in India and other analogous colonial countries. But it would be a completely mistaken application of the Chinese experience if, at the present time in India, Egypt, etc., we were to formulate the *immediate* tasks, slogans and tactical methods in exactly the same form as took place in China, for example, in the Wuhan period, or in the form in which it is necessary to formulate them there at the present time. The tendency to skip over the inevitable difficulties and special tasks of the

present stage of the revolutionary movement in India, Egypt, etc., can only be harmful. It is necessary to carry through much work in the building up and consolidation of the Communist Party and trade union organisations of the proletariat, in the revolutionisation of the trade unions, in the development of economic and political mass demonstrations, and in the winning over of the masses and their liberation from the influence of the national-reformist bourgeoisie, before it is possible to advance in these countries with definite prospects of success to the realisation of such tasks as those which were fully carried out in China during the Wuhan period as the immediate tasks of the struggle of the working class and peasantry.

The interests of the struggle for the class rule of the national bourgeoisie compel the most important bourgeois parties in India and Egypt (Swarajists, Wafdist) still to demonstrate their opposition to the ruling imperialist-feudal bloc. Although this opposition has not a revolutionary but a reformist and class-collaborationist character, this by no means signifies that it has not a special significance. The national bourgeoisie has not the significance of a force in the struggle against imperialism. Nevertheless, this bourgeois-reformist opposition has its real special significance for the development of the revolutionary movement—and this both in a negative as well as in a positive sense—in so far as it possesses any mass influence at all. Its chief feature is that it exerts a *braking, retarding* influence on the development of the revolutionary movement, in so far as it is successful in drawing the toiling masses in its wake and holding them back from the revolutionary struggle. On the other hand, however, the demonstrations of the bourgeois opposition against the ruling imperialist-feudal bloc, even if they do not have any deep foundation, can exert a certain *accelerating* influence on the process of the political awakening of the wide masses of toilers; the concrete open conflicts of the national-reformist bourgeoisie with imperialism, although of little significance in themselves, may, under certain conditions, indirectly serve as the cause of the *unleashing* of even greater revolutionary mass actions.

It is true that the reformist bourgeoisie itself endeavours not to allow any such effect of its oppositional activities, and in one way or another seeks to prevent it in advance. But wherever the objective condition exist for a far-reaching political crisis, there the activities of the national-reformist opposition, even their insignificant conflicts with imperialism which are least of all connected with the real source of the revolution, can become of serious importance. The Communists must learn how to utilise each and every conflict, to develop such conflicts and to broaden their significance, to connect them with the agitation for revolutionary slogans, to spread the news of these conflicts among the wide masses, to awaken these masses to independent, open manifestations in support of their own demands, etc.

### **National-Reformist Danger**

23. The correct tactics in the struggle against such parties as the Swarajists and Wafdists during this stage consist in the successful exposure of their real national-reformist character. These parties have already more than once betrayed the national-emancipatory struggle, but they have not yet finally passed over to the counter-revolutionary camp in the manner of the Kuomintang. There is no doubt that they will do this later on, but at the present time they are so particularly dangerous precisely because their real physiognomy has not yet been exposed in the eyes of the wide masses of toilers. For this exposure there is still needed a very large amount of Communist educational work, and a very great deal of new political experience on the part of the masses themselves. If the Communists do not already succeed in this stage in shaking the faith of the toiling masses in the bourgeois national-reformist leadership of the national movement, then this leadership in the coming upward growth of the revolutionary wave will represent an enormous danger for the revolution.

Consequently it is necessary, by means of correct Communist tactics, adapted to the conditions of the present stage,

to help the toiling masses in India, Egypt, Indonesia and such colonies to emancipate themselves from the influence of the bourgeois parties. This is not to be achieved by any noisy phrases, however radical they may sound superficially, about the *absence of any distinction between the* oppositional national-reformists (Swarajists, Wafdist, etc.) and the British imperialist or their feudal *counter-revolutionary allies*. The national-reformist leaders would easily be able to make use of such a deviation in order to incite the masses against the Communists. The masses see the chief immediate enemy of national emancipation in the form of the imperialist-feudal bloc, which in itself is correct at this stage of the movement in India, Egypt and Indonesia (as far as one side of the matter is concerned). In the struggle against this ruling counter-revolutionary force, the Indian, Egyptian and Indoensian Communists must proceed in advance of all, they must fight more determinedly, more consistently and more resolutely than any petty-bourgeois section or national-revolutionary group. Of course, this fight must not be waged for the organising of any kind of "putsch" or premature attempt at a rising on the part of the small revolutionary minority, but for the purpose of organising the widest possible strata of the masses of toilers in demonstrations and other manifestations so that in this way the active participation of these masses can be guaranteed for a victorious uprising at a further stage of the revolutionary struggle.

At the same time, it is no less important to mercilessly expose before the toiling masses the *national-reformist* character of the Swarajist, Wafdist and other nationalist parties, and in particular of their leaders. It is necessary to expose their *half-heartedness and vacillation in the national struggle*, their bargainings and attempts to reach a *compromise* with British imperialism, their previous capitulations and counter-revolutionary advances, their reactionary resistance to the class demands of the proletariat and peasantry, their empty nationalist-phraseology, their dissemination of harmful illusions about the peaceful decolonisation of the country and

their sabotage in relation to the application of revolutionary methods in the national-emancipatory struggle.

It is necessary to reject the formation of any kind of bloc between the Communist Party and the nationalist-reformist opposition; this does not exclude the formation of temporary agreements and the co-ordinating of separate activities in connection with definite anti-imperialist demonstrations, provided that these demonstrations of the bourgeois opposition can be utilised for the development of the mass movement, and provided that these agreements do not in any way limit the freedom of the Communist Parties in the matter of agitation among the masses and among the organisations of the latter. Of course, in this work the Communists must know how at the same time to carry on the most relentless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois nationalism and against the slightest signs of its influence inside the Labour movement. In such cases the Communist Party must take particular care not only to maintain its complete political independence and to make quite clear its own character, but also, on the basis of facts, to open the eyes of the masses of toilers who are under the influence of the bourgeois opposition, so that they will perceive all the hopelessness of this opposition and the danger of the bourgeois-democratic illusions that it disseminates.

### **Need for Communist Independence**

24. An incorrect estimation of the chief tendency of the parties of the big national bourgeoisie gives rise to the danger of an incorrect estimation of the character and role of the *petty-bourgeois parties*. The development of these parties, as a general rule, follows a course from the national-revolutionary to the national-reformist position. Even such movements as Sun Yat Senism in China, Gandhism in India, Sarekat Islam in Indonesia, were originally radical petty-bourgeois ideological movements which, however, as a result of their service to the big bourgeoisie, became converted into a bourgeois nationalist-reformist movement. After this, in India, Egypt



and Indonesia, there was again founded a radical wing from among the different petty-bourgeois groups (e.g., the Republican Party, Watanists, Sarekat Rayat), which stand for a more or less consistent national-revolutionary point of view. In such a country as India the rise is possible of some new analogous radical petty-bourgeois parties and groups. But the fact must not be lost sight of that these parties, essentially considered, are connected with the national bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeois intelligentsia at the head of these parties puts forward national-revolutionary demands, but at the same time appears more or less conscious as the representative of the *capitalist development* of their country. Some of these elements can become the followers of various kinds of reactionary utopias, but when confronted with feudalism and imperialism they, in distinction from the parties of the big national bourgeoisie, appear at the outset not as reformists but as more or less revolutionary representatives of the anti-imperialist interests of the colonial bourgeoisie. This is the case, at least, so long as the development of the revolutionary process in the country does not put on the order of the day in a definite and sharp form the fundamental international questions of the bourgeois-revolution, particularly the question of the realisation of the agrarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. When this happens then it usually denote the end of the revolutionary character of the petty-bourgeois parties. As soon as the revolution has placed the class interests of the proletariat and the peasantry in critical contradiction not only to the rule of the feudal-imperialist bloc, but also to the class rule of the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeois groups usually go back to the position of the national-reformist parties.

It is absolutely essential that the Communist Parties in these countries should from the very beginning *demarcate themselves in the most clear-cut fashion*, both politically and organisationally, from all the petty-bourgeois groups and parties. In so far as the needs of the revolutionary struggle demand it, a temporary co-operation is permissible and in certain circumstances even a temporary union between the

Communist Party and the national-revolutionary movement, provided that the latter is a genuine revolutionary movement, that it genuinely struggles against the ruling power and that its representatives do not put obstacles in the way of the Communists educating and organising in a revolutionary sense the peasants and wide masses of the exploited. In every such co-operation, however, it is essential to take the most careful precautions in order that this co-operation does not degenerate into a fusion of the Communist movement with the bourgeois-revolutionary movement. The Communist movement in all circumstances must unconditionally preserve the independence in agitation, in organisation and in demonstrations. To criticise the half-heartedness and vacillation of the petty-bourgeois groups, to anticipate their vacillations, to be prepared for them: and at the same time to utilise to the full all the revolutionary possibilities of these strata, to carry on a consistent struggle against petty-bourgeois influence over the proletariat, employ all means to liberate the wide masses of the peasantry from the influence of the petty-bourgeois parties, and to win from them the hegemony over the peasantry—these are the tasks of the Communist Parties

### **Development of The Revolutionary Movement**

25. How rapidly the revolutionary movement in India, Egypt, etc., will reach such a high degree of maturity as it has already reached in China, depends to an essential extent on how quickly there arises a big revolutionary wave. In the event of its postponement for a considerable time the political and organisational ripening of the driving forces of the revolution can only proceed by way of a gradual and relatively slow process of development. If, however, the coming powerful revolutionary wave rises earlier, then the movement may quickly be able to attain a much higher stage of maturity. Under exceptionally favourable circumstances it is not even excluded that the revolution there may be able in one single mighty wave to achieve the conquest of power by the proletariat and peasantry. It is also possible that the process of

the development of the revolution from one stage to another more mature stage will be interrupted for a more or less prolonged period of time, in particular if the coming wave of revolutionary upheaval reaches a relatively small height, and is not of great duration. Consequently it is necessary in every case to subject the **concrete** situation to the most detailed analysis.

The following factors are of decisive significance for the immediate growing over of the revolution from one stage to another higher stage: (1) the degree of development of the revolutionary proletarian leadership of the movement, i.e., of the Communist Party of the given country (the number of its members, its independent character, consciousness and fighting readiness, as well as its authority and connection with the masses and its influence on the trade union and the peasant movement); (2) the degree of organisation and the revolutionary experience of the working class, as well as, to a certain extent, of the peasantry. The revolutionary experience of the masses signifies experience of struggle: in the first place, liberation from the influence over them of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. Since these prerequisites for the first big mass outburst of the revolution, even in the best circumstances, are present only to an insufficient degree, an unusually deep revolutionary crisis and unusually high and persistent revolutionary wave are required for it to be possible for the bourgeois-democratic revolution with the aid of this one wave of upheaval to lead to the complete victory of the proletariat and peasantry. Such a possibility is most easily presented, for example, when the ruling imperialism is temporarily distracted by a long continued war outside the frontiers of the colonial country concerned.

### **Chinese C.P. and The Revolution**

26. Living, concrete, historical dialectics, such as were demonstrated by the now completed first period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China, will give to the Communists, especially those working in the colonial countries, a valuable

experience which it is necessary to study diligently in order to draw the correct conclusions, especially from the mistakes committed in the course of Communist work in the colonies. The rise of the revolutionary wave in China was unusually prolonged (over two years), since it was connected with a protracted internal war. In as much as the Northern Expedition was not conducted directly against the great imperialist Powers, and in as much as the latter, owing to competition between them, were partially passive during the first period, while the bourgeois leadership of the national movement had already for some years held Canton in its hands—a definite, though limited territory—as well as a centralised power backed up by the army, etc., it is accordingly understandable that in this exceptional case a great part of the bourgeoisie in the beginning looked upon the national-emancipatory war as its own particular affair. The Kuomintang, in which it practically played a leading role, in the course of a short time came to be at the head of the national-revolutionary movement, a circumstance which in the course of further events represented an extremely great danger for the revolution.

On the other hand, among the peculiarities of the situation in China must be numbered the fact that the proletariat there was stronger in relation to its bourgeoisie than the proletariat of other countries. It is true that it was weakly organised, but during the upward growth of the revolutionary wave the growth of Labour organisation proceeded at a very rapid rate. The Communist Party also rose in a short time from being a small group to a Party with 60,000 members (and presently even more), and possessing a wide influence among the workers. Naturally in these conditions many bourgeois elements also entered the Party. The Party was lacking in revolutionary experience and, ever more, in traditions of Bolshevism. In the beginning the upper hand in its leadership was taken by wavering elements, which were still only to a very small degree liberated from petty-bourgeois opportunist tendencies which inadequately understood the independent tasks and role of the Communist Party, and which

came out against any decisive development of the agrarian revolution.

The entry of the Communists for a certain period into the leading party of the national revolution, the Kuomintang, in itself corresponded to the requirements of the struggle and of the situation, and was also in the interests of the indispensable Communist work among the fairly wide masses of toilers who followed this Party. In addition, at the beginning the Communist Party of China received in the territory under the rule of the Kuomintang Government the possibility of independent agitation among the masses of workers and peasants and among the soldiers of the national army and their organisations. At that time the Party possessed greater possibilities than it actually made use of. At that time it did not sufficiently carefully explain to the masses its proletarian class position in distinction from Sun Yat Senism and other petty-bourgeois tendencies. In the ranks of the Kuomintang the Communists did not carry out any independent policy, leaving out of account that in any such inevitable bloc the Communist must conduct themselves in an unconditionally critical fashion towards the bourgeois elements and always come out as an independent force. The Communists neglected to expose the vacillations of the national-bourgeoisie and of bourgeois-democratic nationalism, just at the time when this exposure ought to have constituted one of the most important tasks of the Communist Party. The inevitable disruption of the Kuomintang drew nearer and nearer as the national army advanced, but the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party undertook nothing, or almost nothing, in order to prepare the Party in case of a breach, and in order to guarantee its independent position and to unite the revolutionary workers and peasants in an independent fighting bloc which would oppose itself to the leadership of the Kuomintang.

Thus the bourgeois counter-revolutionary coup of Chiang Kai Shek found the revolutionary proletariat completely unprepared, and threw its ranks into confusion. Further, the

leadership of the Communist Party even at that time badly understood the process of the development of the revolution from one stage to another and did not carry through the correct change in the line of the Party made necessary by this coup. In as much as the left-wing of the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Kuomintang during the courses of a certain time still went together with the Communist Party, there took place a territorial separation; there arose the separate governments of Nanking and Wuhan. But the Communist Party did not occupy a leading position even in Wuhan. Very quickly in the Wuhan territory there commenced a second period, characterised, among other things, on the one hand, by the presence of elements of an incipient, still indefinite dual power (the seizure by peasant unions of a number of ruling functions in the villages, and the extension of the functions of the trade unions, determined by the endeavour of the masses to reach a "plebeian" independent solution of the question of power), and, on the other hand, by the absence of sufficiently mature conditions for the organisation of soviets as organs of revolt against the Wuhan Government, in so far as the latter still carried on a revolutionary struggle against the Nanking Government, which represented the treachery of the bourgeoisie to the revolution.

The Communist Party at that time directly hindered the independent actions of the revolutionary masses, it did not facilitate their task of gathering and organising forces, it did not assist in breaking down the influence of the leaders of the Left Kuomintang and their position in the country and in the army. Instead of utilising its participation in the Government for these purposes, it, on the contrary, disguised the whole activity of this Government (individual petty-bourgeois leading members of the party went so far that they even participated in the disarming of the workers' pickets in Wuhan and in sanctioning the punitive expedition to Changsha!).

At the bottom of this opportunist policy lay the hope of avoiding a rupture with the petty-bourgeois leaders of the

Wuhan Government. But, as a matter of fact, this rupture could only be put off for a short space of time. When the mass risings acquired a threatening character the leaders of the Wuhan Kuomintang also began to reach out towards unity with their allies on the other side of the barricades. The revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants still continued to exert all its forces in order to achieve victory. The Communist Party of China now also corrected its line, elected a new leadership, and took its place at the head of the revolution. But the revolutionary wave was already falling. The heroic mass struggle under the slogan of soviets could only achieve a few temporary successes. Only in individual localities did the uprising of the agrarian revolution begin sufficiently early, in the remainder the many millions of the peasant rearguard were delayed in their advance. Instead of the former gross errors of opportunist leadership, there were now revealed, on the contrary, in various places extremely harmful "putschist" mistakes. The preparations for rising also did not take place without great mistakes on the part of the Communists. The heavy defeats once more threw back the revolution, which in the south had already entered into the second stage of development, to the starting point of this stage.

### **Tasks of the C. P. of China**

27. Thanks to the fact that the Chinese national bourgeoisie obtained participation in power, the composition of the former bloc of the imperialist and militarists was partly altered, and the new ruling bloc now represents the immediate chief enemy of the revolution. In order to overthrow it, it is necessary to win over the decisive masses of the proletariat and peasantry to the side of the revolution. This constitutes the most important task of the Chinese Communist Party for the immediate future. The Chinese workers have already acquired an enormous experience. The further strengthening and revolutionisation of the trade union movement and the further strengthening of the Communist Party is essential.

A certain portion of the Chinese peasantry has already outlived bourgeois-democratic illusions and shown considerable activity in the revolutionary struggle, but this is only an insignificant minority of the huge peasant population of China. It is very probable that some petty-bourgeois groups will take up the position of national reformism (inside or outside the Kuomintang) in order by a certain display of bourgeois-democratic opposition to conquer influence over the toiling masses (to these petty-bourgeois reformists belong also Tang Ping San and the social-democratic leaders). Under no circumstances must the significance of these attempts be under-estimated. The isolation of these groups and their exposure before the masses by means of correct Communist tactics constitutes an absolutely essential precondition for the Communist Party to be able to take a really leading position in the movement of the coming new rise of the revolutionary wave in China. At the present time the party must everywhere propagate among the masses the idea of soviets, the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, and the inevitability of the coming revolutionary mass armed uprising. It must already now emphasise in its agitation the necessity of overthrow of the ruling bloc and the mobilisation of the masses for revolutionary demonstrations. Diligently studying the objective conditions of the revolution as they continue to mature, utilising every possibility for the mobilisation of the masses, it must consistently and undeviatingly follow the line of seizure of State power, organisation of soviets as organs of the insurrection, expropriation of the landlords and big property owners, expulsion of the foreign imperialists and the confiscation of their property.

#### **IV. The Immediate Tasks of the Communists**

##### **Difficulties in Colonial Countries**

28. The building up and development of the Communist Parties in the colonies and semi-colonies, the removal of the excessively marked lack of correspondence between the



objective revolutionary situation and the weakness of the subjective factor, represents one of the most important and primary tasks of the Communist International. This task comes up against a whole host of objective difficulties, determined by the historical development and social structure of these countries. Corresponding with the weak development of industry, the working class in these countries is still young and, for their population, relatively small in numbers. The colonial regime of terror, as also the presence of illiteracy, numerous different languages, etc., renders difficult the organisation and development of the working class in general and the rapid development of the Communist Party in particular. The fluidity of composition and the large percentage of women and children are characteristic features of the colonial proletariat. In many places seasonal workers predominate, and even the basic ranks of the proletariat still have one foot in the village. This facilitates the connection between the working class and the peasantry, but makes more difficult the development of the class-consciousness of the proletariat.

Experience has shown that, in the majority of colonial and semi-colonial countries an important if not a predominant part of the Party ranks in the first stage of the movement is recruited from the petty bourgeoisie and, in particular, from the revolutionarily-inclined intelligentsia, very frequently students. It is not uncommon that these elements enter the party because they see in it the most decisive enemy of imperialism, at the same time not always sufficiently understanding that the Communist Party is not only the Party of struggle against imperialist exploitation and oppression, but, is the Party which, as the Party of the proletariat, leads a decisive struggle against all kinds of exploitation and expropriation. Many of these adherents of the party in the course of the revolutionary struggle will reach a proletarian class point of view, another part will find it more difficult to free themselves to the end from the moods, waverings, and half-hearted ideology of the petty bourgeoisie. It is precisely these

elements of the party that find it especially difficult at the critical moment to estimate correctly the role of the national bourgeoisie and to act consistently, and without any kind of vacillation, in the questions of the agrarian revolution, etc. The colonial countries do not possess social-democratic traditions, but neither do they possess Marxist traditions. Our young parties in the process of struggle, in the process of building up the Party, will have to overcome the relics of national petty-bourgeois ideology in order to find the road to Bolshevism.

These objective difficulties make it all the more obligatory for the Communist International to give an absolutely special attention to the tasks of building the Party in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. An especially great responsibility in this connection lies with the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries. This demands not only assistance in the matter of working out the correct political line, accurate analysis of experience in the sphere of organisation and agitation, but also systematic education of the party ranks, the creation of the certain minimum of Marxist-Leninist literature and its translation into the languages of the different colonial countries, most active assistance in the matter of study and Marxist analysis of the economic and social problems of the colonies and semi-colonies, and in the creation of a party press, etc. The Communist Parties in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are bound to exert all their efforts for the creation of a cadre of party functionaries from out of the working class itself, utilising members of the party—intellectuals—in the role of leaders and lecturers for propagandist circles and legal and illegal party schools, so as to educate from the leading workers the necessary agitators, propagandists, organisers and leaders permeated by the spirit of Leninism. The Communist Parties in the colonial countries must become genuinely proletarian parties also in their social composition. Including in their ranks the best elements of the revolutionary intelligentsia, becoming steeled in the process of the daily struggle and of big revolutionary fights, the

Communist Parties must give their chief attention to the task of strengthening the Party organisation in the factories and mines, among the transport workers and among the semi-slaves in the plantations. Everywhere where capitalism herds together the proletariat, the Communist Party must establish its nuclei, including the working class tenements, the big working class barracks of the factories, and the barrack-like plantations so strictly guarded from working class agitation. Nor should work be neglected among the journeymen, apprentices and coolies employed in small handicraft workshops. The native workers and the workers who have come from the metropolis must unite together in one and the same Party organisation. The experience of the older Parties in the matter of a correct combination of legal and illegal work must be utilised in accordance with the situation in the different colonial countries, in order as far as possible to avoid that which took place, for example, in China, where the vast mass organisations were broken up comparatively easily and without any great internal resistance under the blows of the reaction, thus greatly weakening the connection between the Communist Party and the masses.

### **Trade Union Work in the Colonies**

29. Alongside the development of the Communist Party, the most important of the immediate general tasks of the Communists in the colonies and semi-colonies is that of work in the trade unions. The organisation of the unorganised workers, above all in the largest branches of industry (engineering, mining, transport, textiles, etc.), the conversion of the existing organisations into real class trade unions, the fight with the national-reformists and reactionary trade union leaders for the leadership in these organisations—all these things must be included in the tasks of trade union work. Another category of tasks consists in support of the economic interests and immediate demands of the workers in the struggle with the employers and, in particular, in resolute and correct leadership of strikes. It is obligatory for the Communists to carry on revolutionary propagandist work in the reactionary

trade unions which contain masses of workers. In those countries where circumstances dictate the necessity for creating special revolutionary trade unions (because the reactionary trade union leadership hinders the organisation of the unorganised workers, destroys the most elementary demands of the trade union democracy and converts the trade unions into strike-breaking organisations, etc.), it is necessary to consult on this question with the leadership of the R.I.L.U.\* Special attention needs to be given to the intrigues of the Amsterdam International in the colonial countries (China, India, North Africa), and to the exposure of its reactionary character before the masses. It is obligatory for the Communist Party in the metropolis concerned to afford active help to the revolutionary trade union movement of the colony by its advice and by sending permanent instructors. Up to now too little has been done in this connection.

### **Work among the Peasants**

30. Wherever peasant organisations exist—entirely irrespective of their character, as long as they are real mass organisations—the Communist Party must adopt measures in order to penetrate into these organisations. One of the immediate tasks of the party is the correct formulation of the agrarian question in the ranks of the working class, explaining to the latter the importance and decisive role of the agrarian revolution and acquainting members of the party with methods of agitation, propaganda and organisational work among the peasantry. Every party organisation has the duty of studying the specific agrarian situation in the region of its activity and of formulating the corresponding current demands of the peasants. The Communists must everywhere attempt to give a revolutionary character to the existing peasant movement. They must organise both new revolutionary peasant unions and peasant committees, between which and the Communist Party it is necessary to establish regular connections. Both in the peasant masses and in the

\*Red International Labour Unions.

ranks of the proletariat it is essential to carry on energetic propaganda in favour of a fighting bloc of the proletariat and peasantry.

Special "Workers' and Peasants' Parties," whatever revolutionary character they may possess, can too easily at particular periods be converted into ordinary petty-bourgeois parties, and, accordingly, the Communists are not recommended to organise such parties. The Communist Party can never build its organisation on the basis of a fusion of two classes, and in the same way also it cannot make it its task to organise other parties on this basis, which is characteristic of petty-bourgeois groups. The fighting bloc of the masses of workers and peasants can find expression in carefully prepared and periodically convened joint conferences and congresses of representative of revolutionary peasant unions (or their committees) and of trade unions; in certain circumstances it may be found expedient to create revolutionary committees of action, co-ordinating the activity of the organisations of the workers and peasants which stand at the head of various mass activities, etc. Finally, during the revolution one of the fundamental tasks of the Communist Party is to promote the creation of elected soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies. Under any and all circumstances, the Communist Party is bound to exert a decisive influence on the peasant movement, to find out and apply those organisational forms of bloc between the workers and peasants which will most of all facilitate the task of leadership in the peasant movement and to create the prerequisites for the further transformation of these forms into soviets as organs of struggle and power.

### **Youth in the Colonies**

31. In the colonial countries the proletarian youth is exposed to especially grievous suffering, and the relative part played by the youth in the composition of the working class is considerably higher in the colonial countries than in the old capitalist countries. The exploitation of the working youth is subject to no legal limitations; there is no legal restriction of

the working day, the conditions of labour are unbearably burdensome and are accompanied by inhuman conduct on the part of the employers and overseers. Matters are no better with the peasant youth. It is not remarkable that the worker-peasant youth is taking an active part in all the revolutionary movements of the colonial countries. From this youth was derived a great part of the revolutionary organisations and peasant armies in China, the guerilla armies of Korea, which have carried on the struggle against Japanese colonisers, as well as the participants in the heroic risings in Indonesia, etc.

An immediate fundamental task of the Communist Youth International in the colonies is the creation of revolutionary mass organisations of the proletarian youth under Communist leadership, i.e., mass Communist Youth Leagues. In this connection the training of genuinely Communist leading cadres of the youth movement is just as important as securing a mass character and basic proletarian composition for the Communist youth organisations. Together with working youth, it is desirable to attract the best and most devoted revolutionary elements taking part in the peasant youth movement in order to strengthen the proletarian elements in the leading organs of the Communist Youth Leagues. A mass recruitment of the youth from non-proletarian strata into the Communist Youth Leagues is only permissible to the degree that there is guaranteed in the latter an overwhelming proletarian composition and firm Communist leadership.

While taking part in all struggles of the Communist Party, the Communist youth organisation must avoid both efforts to put itself in the place of the Party as regards leadership of the working class (the so-called "vanguard" tendency) as also the peculiar liquidatory tendencies expressed in the denial of the necessity for a youth Communist movement and in the reduction of the significance of the Communist youth organisation to the role of student or other general indefinite youth organisation.

Young Communist Leaguers of the colonies, with the object of winning over the wide masses of the youth taking part in the workers', peasants' and revolutionary movements, and of

liberating them from the influence of national-reformism and pseudo-revolutionary tendencies, must also make use of a system of auxiliary and, in relation to the Y.C.L. legal organisations, building them on the basis of a revolutionary programme and securing the leadership for the Communist Party and Y.C.L.

The Y.C.L. must work in the already existing organisations in such a fashion as to draw them into revolutionary activity and to win influence and leadership within them. While utilising all these organisations and drawing the working masses of the young workers into the revolutionary struggle, the Y.C.L. organisations must not lose their independence or diminish their immediate work. The loss of the Communist youth character and the consequent possible loss of their leadership over the revolutionary youth movement represents a great danger to be faced. Consequently, while utilising, developing and working in auxiliary organisations, the Y.C.L. must strengthen its own immediate work, coming out openly before the masses of working youth and attracting the best elements of the mass organisations into the ranks of the Y.C.L. In the number of these organisations must be reckoned the youth sections of the trade unions and peasant unions, associations of working youth, anti-militarist unions, sports associations, local union, etc.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist International makes it obligatory for all Communist Parties in the colonies to render all possible assistance in the creation and development of the Communist youth movement, and to struggle against any deviations or backward views in the working class and trade unions which express themselves in ignoring the interests of the working youth and in disinclination to participate in the struggle for the demand for improvement of the conditions of the exploited young workers.

### **The Position of Women and Children**

32. The exploitation of the labour of women and children in the colonial countries takes on especially wide dimen-

sions and plunderous forms. The most miserable starvation wages, an unbearably long working day, the association in some regions of women and children for work under slave condition in plantations, etc., prison-like life in working class dwellings, barbarous and reconsiderate treatment—such are the conditions of labour of these sections. At the same time, there is carried on a widespread reactionary work among the proletarian women on the part of the bourgeoisie, missionaries, etc., who have at their disposal considerable monetary resources. But the women workers of the colonies, driven to desperation, are gradually awakening to class consciousness, are entering upon the revolutionary path and decisively and boldly joining the ranks of the struggling colonial proletariat. This was evident, above all, in the self-sacrificing participation of the Chinese working women in the events of the revolution (mass strikes of women workers, individual acts of heroism of women workers, the entrance of peasant women into the ranks of guerrilla fighters). The Communist Parties of the colonies and semi-colonies must pay great attention to work among these strata, particularly in enterprises where women's labour predominates, systematically attracting the women into trade union organisations and winning over the best of them for the Communist Party. In struggling against the influence of hostile organisations, the Party must use all the resources of oral, written, legal and illegal agitation and propaganda at its disposal in order to win over the working women.

Alongside these general tasks, the Communist Parties in the various colonies have a series of special tasks, resulting from the particular social-economic structure and political situation in each country. In proposing to the particular Communist Parties concerned the working out of the whole of these tasks in their concrete plans of action, the Congress indicates below some of the most important of these immediate tasks.



## **China**

33. In *China*, the future growth of the revolution will place before the Party as an immediate practical task the preparation for and carrying through of armed insurrection as the sole path to the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and to the overthrow of the power of the imperialists, landlords and national bourgeoisie—the power of the Kuomintang. Under existing circumstances, characterised fundamentally by the absence of a revolutionary impulse among the wide masses of the Chinese people, the general line of the Party must be the struggle for the masses. The carrying through of this line under the conditions of the strengthening of the anti-imperialist movement, of a certain revival of the strike struggle and of the continuing peasant activity, demands from the Party the application of all its strength for gathering, consolidating and uniting the proletariat around the basic slogans of the Party, an immense organisational work for the strengthening of the revolutionary trade union and peasant associations, maximum attention to the conduct of the everyday economic and political work among the masses of the proletariat and peasantry, and intense activity in explaining to the proletariat the experience of the preceding period of the revolution. At the same time, the Party must explain to the masses the impossibility of a radical improvement in their position, the impossibility of the overthrow of imperialist domination and solution of the tasks of the agrarian revolution, without the overthrow from power of the Kuomintang and militarists and the creation of the rule of soviets.

The Party must utilise every conflict, however insignificant, between the workers and capitalists in the factories, between the peasants and landlords in the villages, between the soldiers and officers in the army, deepening and sharpening these class clashes in order to mobilise the widest masses of workers and peasants and to win them over to its side. The Party must utilise all occurrences of violence on the part of international imperialism against the Chinese

people, which at the present time take the form of a military seizure of different region, as well as all the bloody exploits of infuriated reaction in order to widen the popular protest of the masses against the rulling classes.

The success of the struggle for the masses will be determined to a considerable degree by the extent of the success achieved in applying tactics based on a correct estimate of the situation, and in outliving the mistakes and tendencies of an extreme-left character (putschism, military adventurism, individual terror, etc.) which have occurred in the party, as well as those of an opportunist character such as found their expression in the demands for summoning a national assembly and for the revival of the Kuomintang mass movement. Simultaneously, the party must conquer every tendency in the direction of replacing methods of convincifg and educating the masses by methods of compulsion and commandment, which in the present conditions of cruel class terror, serve so seriously to enhance the danger of a rupture between the party and the toiling masses.

In the sphere of internal party work, the Party must strive to re-establish the nuclei and local Party committees which have been destroyed by the reaction, to improve the social composition of the party, and, in so doing, to concentrate especial attention on the creation of party-nuclei in the important branches of production in the big factories, workshops and railway shops. The Communist Party of China must also devote most serious attention to regulating the social composition of the village organisations, so that these organisations shall be recruited basically from the proletarian, semi-proletarian and the poorest elements of the villages. The putting into effect of the principles of democratic centralism; the guaranteeing, as far as illegal conditions of work permit it, of inner party democracy; transition to collective discussion and decision of questions; and, along with this, struggle against ultra-democratic tendencies in certain organisations leading to breach of party discipline, to the growth of irresponsibility and to the destruction of the authority of the leading party centres.

It is necessary to strengthen the work in the theoretical training of the membership of the party, in the raising of their political level; the establishment of systematic propaganda of Marxism and Leninism, the investigation of the experience and lessons of the preceding stages of the Chinese revolution (the Wuhan period, the Canton insurrection, etc.). In relation to "third" parties (Tan Ping-san, Wang Tsin-wei), representing a weapon of the bourgeois-landlord counter revolution, the task of the Chinese Communist Party consists in a decisive struggle against them, and in the exposure, on the basis of the practical anti-imperialist and mass movement, of the national-reformist activity of these parties as agencies of the ruling classes.

The fundamental slogans, through which the Party must seek to win over the masses, are the following :

- (i) Overthrow of imperialist domination.
- (ii) Confiscation of foreign enterprises and banks.
- (iii) Union of the country, with recognition of the right of each nationality to self-determination.
- (iv) Overthrow of the power of the militarists and the Kuomintang.
- (v) Establishment of the power of soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' representative.
- (vi) The 8-hour working day, increase of wages, assistance to the unemployed and social insurance.
- (vii) Confiscation of all lands of big landlords, land for the peasants and soldiers.
- (viii) The abolition of all governmental, militarist and local taxes and levies; a single progressively graduated income tax.
- (ix) Union with the U.S.S.R. and the world proletarian movement.

## **India**

34. The basic tasks of the *Indian* Communists consist in struggle against British imperialism for the emancipation of the country, for destruction of all relics of feudalism, for the

agrarian revolution and for establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in the form of a soviet republic. These tasks can be successfully carried out only when there will be created a powerful Communist Party which will be able to place itself at the head of the wide masses of the working class, peasantry and all the toilers, and to lead them in the struggle against the feudal-imperialist bloc.

The strike movement of the Indian proletariat now taking place, its independence from bourgeois nationalism, the all-Indian character of this movement, its distribution over almost all branches of industry, the frequent and protracted strikes, the stubbornness and great resoluteness with which the workers have carried them on, the coming forward of leaders of the strikes from the midst of the workers themselves—all these things denote a turning point in the history of the struggle of the Indian proletariat, and prove that in India the pre-conditions have matured which are essential for the creation of a mass Communist Party. The union of all Communist groups and individual Communists scattered throughout the country into a single, independent and centralised Party represents the first task of Indian Communists. While rejecting the principle of the building of the Party on a two-class basis, the Communists must utilise the connections of the existing workers' and peasants' parties with the toiling masses for strengthening *their own party*, bearing in mind that the hegemony of the proletariat cannot be realised without the existence of a consolidated, steadfast Communist Party armed with the theory of Marxism. The agitational work of the Communist Party must be bound up with the struggle for the immediate demands of the workers, at the same time explaining to them the general aims which the Communist Party sets out to achieve and the methods which it applies for their realisation. It is essential to establish nuclei in the various industrial and other enterprises, and these must take an active part in the Labour movement, in the organisation and conduct of strikes and political demonstrations. The Communist organisations must from the very beginning devote special

attention to the training of leading Party cadres from the ranks of the *workers*.

In the *trade unions*, the Indian Communists must mercilessly expose the nationalist-reformist leaders and carry on a decisive struggle for the conversion of the trade unions into genuine class organisations of the proletariat and for the replacement of the present reformist leadership by consistent revolutionary representatives from the mass of the workers. It is especially necessary to expose the method so much favoured by Indian reformists of deciding conflicts by means of petition to the representatives of British imperialism, as well as to "impartial" courts for adjudication between workers and employers. In this struggle, it is necessary to push forward the demands for trade union democracy, for putting the trade union apparatus into the hands of the workers, etc. The levers for Party work in the trade unions must be the Communist fractions as well as groups founded by the Communists and sympathising with them. It is necessary to utilise the present strike wave in order to organise the *unorganised* workers. The miners and engineering workers, the coolies working on the plantations and agricultural labourers in general, represent the least organised sections of the Indian proletariat and the Communists need to devote the necessary attention to them.

The Communists must unmask the national reformism of the Indian National Congress and oppose all the phrases of the Swarajists, Gandhists, etc., about passive resistance, with the irreconcilable slogan of struggle for the emancipation of the country and the expulsion of the imperialists.

In relation to the *peasantry* and peasant organisations the Indian Communists are faced above all with the task of acquainting the widest strata of the peasantry with the general demands of the Party in the agrarian question, for which purpose the Party must work out an agrarian programme of action. Through workers connected with the village, as well as directly, the Communists must stimulate the struggle of the peasantry for partial demands, and in the process of struggle organise peasant unions. It is essential to pay

particular attention to make sure that the newly-created peasant organisations do not fall under the influence of exploiting strata in the village. It is necessary to give to the existing peasant organisations a concise programme of concrete demands and to support the activities of the peasants through demonstrations of workers in the towns.

It must be remembered that under no circumstances can the Communists relinquish their right to open criticism of the opportunist and reformist tactics of the leadership.

### **Indonesia**

35. In *Indonesia*, the suppression of the rising of 1926, the arrest and exile of thousands of members of the Communist Party, greatly disorganised its ranks. The need for rebuilding the destroyed party organisation demands from the party new methods of work, corresponding to the illegal conditions created by the police regime of Dutch imperialism. The transference of the centre of gravity of all activity of the party to the places where the town and village proletariat is aggregated—to the factories and plantations; the restoration of the dissolved trade unions and the struggle for their legalisation; special attention to the partial *practical* demands of the peasantry; the development and strengthening of the peasant organisations; work within all the mass nationalist organisations, in which the Communist Party must establish fractions and rally round it national-revolutionary elements; decisive struggle against the Dutch social-democrats who, utilising the support of the Government, are attempting to secure a base for themselves in the native proletariat; winning over the numerous Chinese workers for the class struggle and national-revolutionary struggle and the establishment of connections with the Communist movements in China and India—these are some of the most important tasks of the Indonesian Communist Party.

### **Korea**

36. In *Korea*, the Communists must strengthen their work in the ranks of the proletariat, and in their efforts for a general

increase of activity and strengthening of the workers' organisations and peasant federations, they must attempt to secure the reorganisation of the trade unions so that they include the most important strata of the working class and combine economic struggle with political demands. At the same time, they must associate in the closest possible fashion the demands for the national emancipation of the country with the slogan of the agrarian revolution, which is acquiring evermore pressing importance in consequence of the growing pauperisation of the peasantry under the plundering colonial regime.

In the ranks of the toiling masses, from which are derived the big religious-national unions (Chun-Dokyo, etc.), it is necessary to carry on a patient, revolutionary educational work in order to liberate them from the influence of the national-reformist leaders. The Communist movement must be strengthened in all existing revolutionary mass organisations; instead of attempting to create a general national-revolutionary party, on the basis of individual membership, endeavours must be made to co-ordinate and unite the activities of the different national-revolutionary organisations with the aid of local committees of action, so as to create, in fact, a bloc of revolutionary elements under proletarian Communist leadership, criticising in so doing the half-heartedness and vacillations of the petty-bourgeois nationalists and continually unmasking them before the masses. New forces must be drawn into the Communist Party, above all from among the industrial workers; this will be the best guarantee for the Bolshevik development of the Party, and especially it will facilitate the absolutely necessary liquidation of the harmful spirit of factionalism in its ranks.

## **Egypt**

37. In *Egypt*, the Communist Party will be able to play an important role in the national movement, but only if it bases itself on the organised proletariat. The organisation of trade unions among the Egyptian workers, the strengthening of

the class struggle, and leadership in the class struggle are, consequently, the first and most important tasks of the Communist Party. The greatest danger to the trade union movement in Egypt at the present time lies in the bourgeois nationalists getting control of the workers' trade unions. Without a decisive struggle against their influence, genuine class organisation of the workers is impossible. One of the essential defects of the Egyptian Communists in the past has been that they have worked exclusively among the urban workers. A correct setting out of the agrarian question, the gradual drawing into the revolutionary struggle of the wide masses of agricultural workers and peasants, and the organisation of these masses, constitutes one of the most important tasks for the Party. Special attention needs to be devoted to the building up of the Party itself, which is still very weak.

### **Northern Africa**

38. In the French colonies of *North Africa*, the Communists must carry on work in all the already existing national-revolutionary mass organisations in order to unite through them the genuine revolutionary elements on a consistent and clear platform of a fighting bloc of workers and peasants. As far as the organisation "Etoile Nord Africain" is concerned, the Communists must secure that it develops, not in the form of a party, but in the form of a fighting bloc of various revolutionary organisations, collectively associating with it as a whole the trade unions of industrial and agricultural workers, peasant unions, etc. In so doing, it is necessary to guarantee the leading role of the revolutionary proletariat, and for this purpose it is necessary, above all, to develop the trade union movement as the most important organisational mass basis for Communist influence. The achievement of an ever-closer co-operation of the revolutionary sections of the white proletariat with the native working class must be our constant task. In the agrarian question, it is necessary to be able to direct the growing hatred of the village population, evoked by the policy of expropriation



conducted by French imperialism, into the channels of useful organised struggle (improved organisation of strikes of agricultural workers, strengthening of unions of agricultural workers in Algiers, etc.). The Communist organisation in each individual country must attract into its ranks in the first place native workers, fighting against any negligent attitude towards them. The Communist Parties, actively basing themselves on the native proletariat, must formally and in fact become independent sections of the Communist International.

### **The Negro Question**

39. In connection with the colonial question, the Sixth Congress draws the close attention of the Communist Parties to the negro question. The position of the negroes varies in different countries and accordingly requires concrete investigation and analysis. The territories, in which compact negro masses are to be found, can be divided according to their general features into the following groups :

(i) The United States and some South American countries, in which the compact negro masses constitute a minority in relation to the white population.

(ii) The Union of South Africa, where the negroes are the majority in relation to the white colonists.

(iii) The negro States which are actually colonies or semi-colonies of imperialism (Liberia, Haiti, San-Domingo).

(iv) The whole of Central Africa divided into the colonies and mandated territories of various imperialist Powers (Great Britain, France, Portugal, etc.). The tasks of the Communist Parties have to be defined in their dependence on the concrete situation.

In the United States are to be found 12 million negroes. The majority of them are tenants, paying rent in kind and living under semi-feudal and semi-slave conditions. The position of these negro tenant farmers is exactly the same as that of agricultural labourers, being only formally distinguishable from the slavery that the constitution is supposed to have abolished. The white landowner, uniting in one

person the landlord, merchant and usurer, employs the lynching of negroes, segregation and other methods of American bourgeois democracy, reproducing the worst forms of exploitation of the slavery period. Owing to the industrialisation of the South a negro proletariat is coming into existence. At the same time, the emigration of the negroes to the North continues at an ever-increasing rate, where the huge majority of negroes become unskilled labourers. The growth of the negro proletariat is the most important phenomenon of recent years. At the same time there arises in the negro quarters—the negro ghetto—a petty bourgeoisie, from which is derived a stratum of intellectuals and a thin stratum of bourgeoisie, the latter acting as the agent of imperialism.

One of the most important tasks of the Communist Party consists in the struggle for a complete and real equality of the negroes, for the abolition of all kinds of racial, social and political inequalities. It is the duty of the Communist Party to carry on the most energetic struggle against any exhibition of white chauvinism, to organise active resistance against lynching, to strengthen its work among negro proletarians, to draw into its ranks the most conscious elements of the negro workers, to fight for the acceptance of negro workers in all organisations of white workers, and especially in the trade unions (which does not exclude, if necessary, their organisation into separate trade unions), to organise the masses of peasants and agricultural workers in South, to carry on work among the negro petty-bourgeois tendencies such as “Garveyism” and to carry on a struggle against the influence of such tendencies in the working class and peasantry. In those regions of the South in which compact negro masses are living, it is essential to put forward the slogan of the “Right of Self-determination for Negroes”. A radical transformation of the agrarian structure of the Southern States is one of the basic tasks of the revolution. Negro Communists must explain to non-negro workers and peasants that only their close union with the white proletariat and joint struggle with them against the

American bourgeoisie can lead to their liberation from barbarous exploitation and that only the victorious proletarian revolution will completely and permanently solve the agrarian and national questions of the Southern United States in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the negro population of the country.

In the Union of South Africa, the negro masses, which constitute the majority of the population, are being expropriated from the land by the white colonists and by the State, are deprived of political rights and of the right of freedom of movement, are subjected to most brutal forms of racial and class oppression, and suffer simultaneously from pre-capitalist and capitalist methods of exploitation and oppression. The Communist Party which has already achieved definite successes among the negro proletariat, has the duty of continuing still more energetically the struggle for complete equality of rights for the negroes, for the abolition of all special regulations and laws directed against negroes, and for confiscation of the land of the landlords. In drawing into its organisation non-negro workers, organising them in trade unions, and in carrying on a struggle for the acceptance of negroes by the trade unions of white workers, the Communist Party has the obligation to struggle by all methods against every racial prejudice in the ranks of the white workers and to eradicate entirely such prejudices from its own ranks. The party must determinedly and consistently put forward the slogan for the creation of an independent native republic, with simultaneous guarantees for the rights of the white minority, and the struggle *in deeds* for its realisation. In proportion as the development of capitalist relationships disintegrates the tribal structure, the Party must strengthen its work in the education in class consciousness of the exploited strata of the negro population, and co-operate in their liberation from the influence of the exploiting tribal strata, which become more and more agents of imperialism.

In the *Central African colonies* of imperialism, colonial

exploitation takes on the very worst forms, uniting slave-owning, feudal and capitalist methods of exploitation. In the post-war period, capital from the imperialist metro-politan countries has flowed in an ever-growing stream to the African colonies, compelling the concentration of considerable masses of the expropriated and proletarianised population in plantations, mining and other enterprises. The Congress makes it a duty of the Communist Parties in the metropolitan countries to put an end to the indifference which they have exhibited in regard to the mass movements in these colonies, and instead, to afford energetic support both in the imperialist centres and in the colonies themselves to these movements, at the same time attentively studying the situation in these countries for the purpose of exposing the bloody exploits of imperialism and of creating the possibility of organisational connections with the developing proletarian elements there which are so mercilessly exploited by imperialism.

### **Latin America**

40. In *Latin America*, the Communists must everywhere actively participate in the revolutionary mass movements directed against the landlord regime and against imperialism, even where these movements are still under the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie. In so doing, however, the Communists may not under any circumstances politically subordinate themselves to their possibly temporary ally. While struggling for the hegemony during the revolutionary movement, the Communists must strive in the first place for the political and organisational independence of their party, securing its transformation into the leading party of the proletariat. In their agitation, the Communists must especially emphasise the following slogans :

(i) Expropriation without compensation and the handing over of a part of the big plantations and *latifundia*\* to the collective cultivation of the agricultural workers, and the

\* Huge farms or plantations worked by serf labour.

distribution of the other portion between the peasants, tenant farmers and colonists.

(ii) Confiscation of foreign enterprises (mines, industrial enterprises, banks, etc.), and of the big enterprises of the national bourgeoisie and big landlords.

(iii) The repudiation of State debts, and the liquidation of any kind of control over the country on the part of imperialism.

(iv) The introduction of the 8-hour working day and the stamping out of semi-slave like conditions of labour.

(v) The arming of the workers and peasants and the conversion of the army into a workers' and peasants' militia.

(vi) The establishment of the Soviet power of the workers, peasants and soldiers, in place of the class rule of the big landlords and of the church. The central place in Communist agitation must be occupied by the slogan of a Workers' and Peasants' Government, in contradistinction to the so-called "revolutionary" governments of the military dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie.

The fundamental pre-requisite for the success of the whole revolutionary movement in these countries lies in the ideological and organisational strengthening of the Communist Parties and in their connection with the toiling masses and with the mass organisations. The Communist Parties must unceasingly strive for the organisation of the industrial workers into class trade unions, especially the workers in big enterprises owned by imperialism, for the raising of the level of their political and class consciousness and for the eradication of reformist, anarcho-syndicalist and corporate ideology. At the same time it is necessary to organise the peasants, tenant farmers and cultivators into peasant unions. It is necessary to assist the extension of sections of the League Against Imperialism, in which Communist fractions must carry on work. Very important is the closest possible mutual co-operation between all the revolutionary mass organisations of workers and peasants, and primarily of the Communist Parties, in the countries of Latin America and their connection with the corresponding

international organisations and also with the revolutionary proletariat in the United States.

### **Tasks in Imperialist Countries**

41. The immediate tasks of the Communist Parties of the *imperialist countries* in the colonial question bear a three-fold character. In the first place, the establishment of regular connections between the Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union organisations of the imperialist centres, on the one hand, and the corresponding revolutionary organisations of the colonies, on the other hand. The connections hitherto established between the Communist Parties of the imperialist centres and the revolutionary organisations of the corresponding colonial countries, with the exception of a few cases, cannot be regarded as adequate. This fact can only in part be explained by objective difficulties. It is necessary to recognise that so far not all the Parties in the Communist International have fully understood the decisive significance of the establishment of close, regular and constant relations with the revolutionary movements in the colonies for the purpose of affording these movements active support and immediate practical help. Only in so far as the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries render in fact practical assistance to the revolutionary movement in the colonies, in so far as their help actually facilitates the struggle of the corresponding colonial countries against imperialism, can their position in the colonial question be recognised as a genuinely Bolshevik one. In this lies the criterion of the revolutionary activity in general.

The second series of tasks consists in genuine support of the struggle of the colonial peoples against imperialism through the organisation of mass demonstrations and other effective activities of the proletariat. In this sphere, the activity of the Communist Parties of the big capitalist countries has also been insufficient. The preparation and organisation of such demonstrations of solidarity must undoubtedly become one of the basic elements of Communist agitation among the mass of

the workers of the capitalist countries. The Communists must expose the true spoliatory character of the capitalist colonial regime by all the agitational means at its disposal (press, public demonstrations, parliamentary platform); they must mercilessly tear aside the network of lies with the help of which the colonial system is represented as an affair of civilisation and general progress. A special task in this sphere is the struggle against missionary organisations, which acts as one of the most effective levers for imperialist expansion and for enslavement of the colonial peoples.

The Communists must mobilise the wide masses of workers and peasants in the capitalist countries on the basis of the demand for granting, unconditionally and without reservation, complete State independence and sovereignty to the colonial peoples. The fight against the bloody suppression of colonial risings, against armed intervention of the imperialists against the national revolutions, against the growth of the military aggressiveness of imperialism, with its new armed seizures of territory, demands from the international proletariat a systematic, organised and self-sacrificing struggle. It is necessary to take into account the lessons to be drawn from the fact that not a single section of the Communist International in the capitalist countries has succeeded to an adequate degree in mobilising the masses for active support of the Chinese revolution against the unceasing attacks of world imperialism. The preparations for world war, the attack of the imperialists against the peoples of "their" colonies, with a view to their "pacification," places the task of active support for the colonial revolution in the centre of attention and struggle for the proletariat of the capitalist countries.

Striving for the immediate recall of the armed forces of imperialism from the oppressed countries, the Communist Parties must work unceasingly for the organisation of mass action in order to prevent the transport of troops and munitions to the colonies.

*The struggle against the colonial policy of social-democracy must be looked upon by the Communist Party as an organic*

constituent part of its struggle against imperialism. The Second International by the position it adopted on the colonial question at its last Congress in Brussels, has finally given sanction to what has already always been the practical activity of the different socialist parties of the imperialist countries during the post-war years. The colonial policy of social-democracy is a policy of active support of imperialism in the exploitation and oppression of the colonial people. It has officially adopted the point of view which lies at the basis of the organisation of the "League of Nations", according to which the ruling classes of the developed capitalist countries have the "right" to rule over the majority of the peoples of the globe and to subject these peoples to a cruel regime of exploitation and enslavement. In order to deceive a portion of the working class and to secure its co-operation in the maintenance of the colonial regime of plunder, social-democracy, in the most shameful and repulsive manner, defends the exploits of imperialism in the colonies. It disguises the real content of the capitalist colonial system, it wilfully ignores the connection between colonial policy and the danger of a new imperialist war, which is threatening the proletariat and toiling masses of the whole world. Wherever the indignation of the colonial peoples finds vent in the emancipatory struggle against imperialism, social-democracy, notwithstanding its lying phrases, in practice always stands on the side of the imperialist executioners of the revolution. During the last few years, the socialist parties of all the capitalist countries have been voting for the credits which the Governments of these countries demand for the carrying on of war against the colonial peoples struggling for their freedom (Morocco, Syria, Indonesia), they themselves take a direct part in the business of colonial exploitation (French socialists act as governors in the colonies at the appointment of imperialist Governments, the socialist co-operatives of Belgium participate in colonial enterprises for the exploitation of the negro population of the Congo), and they approve of the most cruel measures for the suppression of colonial uprisings (defence by the leaders of the British Labour Party of intervention in China, the activity of



the Dutch Socialist Party in defence of the suppression of the insurrection in Indonesia). The social-democratic theory, alleging that the capitalist colonial regime can be reformed and converted into a "good colonial regime," is a mask behind which the social-democrats attempt to conceal their true social-imperialist character. The Communists must tear this mask from them and demonstrate to the toiling masses of the imperialist countries that the socialist parties are the collaborators and direct accomplices of imperialist colonial policy, that they have in this sphere betrayed in the most flagrant fashion their own socialist programme and that they have become an agency of imperialist plunder in the imperialist countries and in the colonies.

The Communists must pay the greatest attention to the attempt of the social-democrats, made with the aid of the capitalist Governments, to extend their influence in the colonies and to establish there their own sections and organisations. These attempts correspond to the policy of that portion of the imperialist colonisers which makes it its aim to reinforce its position in the colonies by the buying up of definite strata of the native population. The specific conditions obtaining in some colonies may lend a certain success to these attempts and lead to the temporary development of a reformist movement in these countries under the influence of the social-democracy of the capitalist countries. The task of the Communists must be to wage a decisive struggle against such attempts, to expose the colonial policy of the socialists before the native masses and in this way to direct against the social-democratic leaders—servants of imperialism—the same well-deserved hatred which the oppressed colonial peoples bear against the imperialists.

In all these spheres, the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries can only achieve success if they also carry on an intensive propaganda in their *own ranks* in order to explain the Communist attitude to the colonial question, in order to eradicate completely every vestige of social-democratic ideology in this question and to resist any possible deviation from the correct Leninist line.

## *Appendix XI*

# **From 'The Labour Monthly', London**

### **A. INDIA IN THE LABOUR WORLD \***

There is a vague idea that India is an agricultural country, is industrially dormant, and is only slowly awakening to modern industrialism.

But fifteen per cent of a population of three hundred millions makes up a number of forty-five million people in India living by industrial and commercial activity. The case of Great Britain as a standard is misleading. Each group of industrial workers producing outputs in immense quantities at a very rapid rate, with the assistance of scientific appliances, requires a large group of human beings employed on large tracts of land and sea, near or far, for the supply of raw materials. In all large countries, therefore, the ratio of 80 per cent. of peasantry to 20 per cent. of industrial workers is a necessary factor of modern industrial life.

Modern imperialism makes up for Great Britain what cannot be provided by nature in her island bounds. Thus alongside of the political imperialism, which can always be altered or abolished by a stroke of the pen in the legislature, there has now grown up an economic inter-relationship between Britain and the East which cannot be given up without disaster to the industrial workers of Britain. Political imperialism of Britain artificially prevented India from manufacturing her own raw products. The growing strength and demands of Labour in Great Britain created an interest for the British manufacturers

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\* Written by Shapurji Saklatvala, Published in : *The Labour Monthly* November, 1921, London.

to start manufacturing a limited amount of output in India. This in the course of years opened the eyes of the Indian bourgeoisie, who adopted modern industrialism for their own gain and in direct rivalry against the European concerns. This in process of time brought about a mutual understanding between the foreign and Indian exploiters, who jointly decided to speed up industrialism. The European owner of small factories in India was soon reduced to the necessity of extending and consolidating his concerns in India to keep pace with the local rivalries. He now finds that with a wise manipulation of his affairs by becoming the owner of factories and mines in India, ostensibly as a foreign rival of himself and his own concerns in Great Britain, he can obtain a controlling advantage over British Labour at home, by creating a rival cheaper group of Labour in India.

This development of the economic significance of India and England can be observed in the exultant and self-congratulatory speeches at meetings of companies registered in England which have their places of industry in the East. The new concerns registered annually in India from 1910 up to the outbreak of the war in 1914 were 245, 334, 289, 356 for each year respectively. Then came the war years with the consequent scarcity of European and American machinery and Government control over investments in private companies. Thus during the years 1914 to 1918 the above figures of new concerns in India shrank to 112, 121, 184, 276, 290. As soon as the artificial barriers of war years had been raised, the number of new companies registered in India, March, 1919, to March, 1920, was 905, and 1920 to 1921 was 965. The average total capital of the new companies registered in India year by year was approximately £12,000,000\* per year for the years 1910-1914. In the first three years of the war this average fell to £6,000,000 per year. With the revival of war industries it sprang up to £18,000,000 per year during the last two years of the war. In 1919 it assumed the enormous figure of

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\* For facility of European readers all money figures are reduced from Indian Rupees to British £ sterling at the normal rate of Rs. 15 to the £.

£183,000,000 and 1920 to March, 1921, owing to the extraordinary disturbances in the exchange rate, it came up to £100,000,000. From these figures one can imagine the accelerated speed with which industrialism is growing in India. As if this was not sufficient to satisfy the ambitions of the Indian as well as the British company promoters, the cry of protective duties has not only been theoretically advanced, but is practically pushed forward by 11 per cent and 20 per cent. duties on imports of manufactured articles.

The following are up-to-date figures of the position in leading lines of industry :

INDIAN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, 1921.

	<i>Companies</i>	<i>Total Capital</i>
Cotton	264	£19,000,000
Jute	76	10,000,000
Iron and Steel	4	20,000,000
Coal Mining	236	6,000,000
Tea	300	22,000,000

All the above concerns can produce goods under advantageous conditions of native raw materials close at hand and docile labour, at least as it was before the war and before serious attempts at Labour organisation were made. Further, with cheap labour and by ignoring mass claims to education, insurance, etc., the manufacturers obtain advantages of cheap transit, cheap postage and light taxes. The selling prices of articles produced in India are always regulated by the selling prices of rival articles imported from Europe, which have to pay transport charges, sea freight, marine insurance, Customs duties. In the commercial world India had once attained fame on vague reports of her diamonds and pearls and gold and silks. but to-day, amongst the investing world, India is gaining a very substantial reputation for high dividends. Take her cotton mills. In good years Indian cotton concerns as a whole have

\*A considerable number of mines being private proprietary concerns, their capital is not registered and is not included in the above figures. Similarly, leather works and oil mills are not to be found in official registers

in a single year earned fully 100 per cent. of capital as dividends, considering the earning to be made on original bona-fide investments and disregarding the bonus and presentation shares given to the shareholders out of the profits. Taking the Central India Mills—which is undoubtedly one of the most successful firms in the cotton world—its published dividend for the year 1920 has been 160 per cent. but one has to realise that this percentage is on an inflated figure of capital of over £300,000, whereas it actually works out at 500 per cent. on the original investment of £100,000, which was all that the shareholders ever had to find for this concern. The Bombay Dyeing Mills and the Century Mills both show a dividend of 128 per cent. in 1919. The Swadeshi Mills of Bombay had a dividend of 120 per cent. each for the years 1919 and 1920, and so did the Dunbar and the Muir Mills of Calcutta divide 120 per cent. in 1920. The Phoenix Mill, the New City of Bombay Mill, and Madhowji Mills had a dividend of 100 per cent. in 1919. The Fajulbhoy Mills declared a dividend of 168 per cent. in 1920, and the New City of Bombay and the Phoenix Mills also declared 160 per cent. each in 1920, but the New Ring Mill, under Messrs. Kettlewell, Bullen and Co., of Calcutta, beat the above records by declaring a dividend of 365 per cent. for the year 1920.

Dozens of cotton mills may be cited which declared dividends between 50 per cent. and 100 per cent. in the years 1919 and 1920. And these are the concerns that after mouthfuls of talk of “reform” and “charities” for the workers still insist upon 60 hours a week and barely a shilling a day average wages, and plead poverty and shout at injustice if ever anybody offered a mild suggestion of an eight-hour day and a minimum wage of at least £3 per week.

Opening the dividend sheets of jute mills, where not only wages but the general treatment of workers can both be described as a disgrace of modern mankind, the following dividends are publicly recorded either for the year 1919 or for the year 1920:

Albion Mills	125 per cent
Alexandra Mills	150 „ „

Alliance Mills	175	per cent
Auckland Mills	150	„ „
Budge-Budge Mills	132	„ „
Caledonian Mills	140	„ „
Clive Mills	160	„ „
Dalhousie Mills	150	„ „
Delta Mills	150	„ „
Empire Mills	200	„ „
Fort Gloster Mills	225	„ „
Ganges Mills	180	„ „
Goure-Pore Mills	260	„ „
Hoogly Mills	400	„ „
Howrah Mills	130	„ „
India Mills	220	„ „
Kamar Hatty Mills	250	„ „

and following the concerns further down the alphabetical list from the letter K to the letter W, I can assure the reader of quite a dozen concerns which have during one of the three years 1918, 1919, or 1920 earned dividends between 150 per cent. and 330 per cent.

The Dundee jute workers do not yet realise the urgent need of making the Bengal jute workers, as well as the Bengal jute growers, a part and parcel of the British Jute Workers' Federation, demanding a six-hour day and £5 a week minimum wages, whether the factory be in Dundee or in Calcutta. The wages in Bengal jute factories are registered by the Government Commission at 14s. a *month* up to 38s. a *month* in various departments. The Dundee jute workers, to maintain this rivalry against themselves, have got to contribute not only in money towards the maintenance of the British Navy, but even in men, by supplying Scottish Highlanders to terrorise over the jute growers, as well as the jute workers, in Bengal, and to teach them obedience to a law and order which insists on maintaining the right of the masters to extract 200 per cent. and 300 per cent. dividends from the misery of the people.

To continue the list of profits from industry to industry would be an endless task. The Bengal coal mines, which are

mostly under the ownership of British masters, and where the miners work from 60 to 72 hours a week on an average wage of under 8d. per day per head, show dividends rising to 120 per cent. In one case the average dividend per annum steadily for fifteen years from 1906 has been 95 per cent. Tea plantations have given average earnings between 1913 and 1919 of 20 to 27 per cent.; and this does not include the private companies' profits, which are not published. The Bengal Paper Mills have given a dividend of 52 per cent. for the last four years, the Bengal Timber Trading Company 40 per cent. for two years, and 75 per cent. for three years. The Cawnpore Sugar Works gave 40 per cent. in 1919 and 60 per cent. in 1920. The Hooghly Docking Company has given dividends of 80, 150, and 100 per cent. in the last three years of the war. The Bombay Flour and Oil Mill Company has given 100, 70 and 140 per cent. during the last three years. Thacker and Company, a publishing firm, has declared an increasing dividend of 40, 60, 80, 80 and 100 per cent. during the last five years.

The British worker desires his wages to be increased and safeguarded, and he would even like on this account to see the product of his toil to be a little higher in price if necessary. So far, unfortunately, he has failed to realise that the customer of the product of his toil should also be able to respond to this economic adjustment, and if the Indian workers' wages do not rise appreciably, and the British wages aspire to rise continually, the Indian worker cannot be the customer of the British worker. If the Lancashire worker will look at the trade figures from 1905 up till 1920 he will perceive that the total money value of his goods sent to India was for the first five years £23,000,000 to £24,000,000; for the next four years it averaged £31,000,000 per year, and in the war years with the help of high prices it maintained an average of about £25,000,000 a year; and in the period 1919-1920, with booming profiteering, the value nominally was £46,000,000, but the bulk of these goods still lie unpaid for in the Indian ports. The value of woollen goods for all these fifteen years kept between £800,000 and

£1,000,000. But these are figures of *values*, which are of interest to the profiteers, and the workers have got to study the figures of *quantities*, because it is the quantities that represent employment or unemployment. In the pre-war years, the cotton goods sent to India ranged from 2,000,000,000 yards to 3,000,000,000 yards a year, and during the war years this quantity fell to about 1,800,000,000 yards per year. But with soaring prices of British goods and with miserable wages of Indian peasants and workers, the quantity of Lancashire piece goods fell to below 1,000,000,000 yards per year for 1919 and 1920. Similarly, woollen goods, which were for ten years before the war about 12,000,000 yards per year, fell to 3,000,000 yards last year. This represents shrinkage of employment in Great Britain. With this shrinkage of employment in Great Britain, the consumption of the working classes in Great Britain herself must needs fall below the normal line. The report of the Co-operative Wholesale Society for this year reveals this doleful tale, where the working-class families had to buy 8 per cent. less food, 50 per cent. less clothing, 60 per cent. less draperies, and 35 per cent. less furniture and household articles during the last year owing to widespread unemployment. The part that has been played in this by the destruction of the markets of Central Europe and of Russia has already been widely pointed out; but the part that has been played by the impoverishment of the Indian workers is less generally realised. In either case the neglect of effective working-class solidarity abroad has reacted ruinously on the home position of the workers.

One of the reasons of the very long continuance of the miserable condition of Labour in India alongside the rapid strides of Western industrialism was the overlooking of the importance of Labour organisation by the Indian leaders of thought, who for a generation were completely swayed by the hypocrisies of the British Liberal Party. At a certain period the Indian National Congress officially prided itself in being the representative of the aristocracy of wealth and talent. When the question of Indian Labour was first taken up by an official committee in England, the millowners of Bombay



secured the most brilliant and promising Parsi politician (whose career was cut short by his untimely death), Dr. Bahdoorji, as their delegate, and sent him to England to fight for Labour conditions in India to be left as they were.

The first ostensible serious champion of Labour as such was Mr. Lokhande, of Bombay. He was, however, widely denounced as set up by wire-pullers, not for the purpose of fighting Labour, but for the deliberate purpose of discrediting the demands of Indian politicians. Later on, during the Montagu Reforms agitation, a similar role was attributed to Dr. Nair, of Madras. The action and methods adopted by both these gentlemen did not disprove the charge against them, and they had less of a programme of Labour rights and more of a reactionary propaganda against India's political rights. However, both were persistent Labour agitators, whatever their ulterior motives may be, and Lokhande, of Bombay, remained in very intimate touch with the daily life of the Bombay cotton mill operatives, and at times he did expose certain conditions of Bombay labour life which commanded public attention. Whatever the direct purpose of Lokhande, the very role that he undertook to play did a measure of good in the early stages of the first Factory Act for India, and perhaps in a lesser degree, Dr. Nair's activities also contributed their share in the acceptance of a semblance of rights for the workers in the Montagu Scheme. Lokhande's agitation, and his familiarity with Bombay workers, produced another good result, in that the consciousness amongst the Bombay mill workers of their wretched conditions, and a desire for united action, were definitely created in them.

The genius of uniting together within a certain trade has always existed amongst the Indian people. For instance, the particular caste that gives hall porters and night watchmen to commercial offices and banks in large cities has been always united together in its own way for the last thirty years and has at times even put forward joint action against some grievous wrong. It was in the commencement of the present century that the European railway guards working on the Great Indian

Peninsular Railway, though not possessing any regular Union, combined together temporarily and carried out an organised strike and won their point. The Indian signallers in the same railway company, following this example, but forgetting that they were not the blessed bearers of the white man's burden, organised themselves into a regular Union and went in for a strike, with the disastrous result that the railway company, using the British Army signallers to blackleg them, broke the strike and finally dismissed them all. The Bombay cotton mill operatives have for thirty years been organised under some benevolent committee, as a society for the protection of the workers. This society has at times functioned with fair success, and it left a slight impress of its power on the Factory Commission and the Factory Act of 1911.

In 1911, a systematic effort was made in London to draw the attention of prominent Trade Union leaders here to their duty to assist in organising Indian Labour along British lines, for the mutual protection of Indian as well as British Labour, but, after a couple of enthusiastic meetings, the British Trade Union leaders decided to drop the whole matter and preferred not to arouse anger amongst the India Office authorities. From 1912 to 1915 the younger Indians in England took various opportunities to arouse an interest amongst the leaders of public opinion in India on the question of mass rights and Labour organisations. The early years of the war prevented any active operations being launched out. However, as the war developed into an unending campaign of European international jealousies, definite measures were taken in 1916 to found in London a joint body of Indian and British Trade Unionists and Socialists (the Workers' Welfare League of India of London), with the definite object of bringing about a working connection between the workers of India and the workers of Britain in the same industries, and of demanding an approximation of legislative and economic standards for workers of both countries.

Meanwhile, on another side, an impetus was given to Labour organisation in India on European lines by the activities

of Mrs. Annie Besant and those associated with her. Taking timely advantage of a strike that was being carried on by certain cotton mill operatives in Madras, Mr. B. P. Wadia, Mrs. Besant's staunch adherent in Theosophy, and a loyal lieutenant for a long time in all her activities, headed the cause of the Madras workers and formed the strikers into a Union, after the pattern of British Union. Mr. Wadia then came over to England and supplemented the political propaganda of Mrs. Besant with a Labour propaganda in British Labour circles. Mr. Wadia's efforts and work for the first time aroused a general interest amongst the British Trade Unionists in questions of Indian Labour, and indirectly solidified the floating opinion that was aroused in this matter by the Workers' Welfare League of India working from its head-quarters in London.

Organisation rapidly extended, particularly in the Punjab and in Bombay, under the direction of Joseph Baptista, Chaman Lall and Lajpat Rai. Unions were formed of railway workers, post office workers, printers, clerks, textile workers tramway drivers, gasworkers, and other trades. After a period of effort, during which some 600,000 workers in different trades were organised in some fashion or another under most difficult circumstances, the definite step was taken of establishing the All India Trade Union Congress. The first meeting of this congress took place in Bombay in the autumn of 1920, and its second meeting is now announced to be held in November of this year in the centre of the Bengal coal fields, in a colliery town called Jharria, round about which 400,000 miners are grouped.

The future of Trade Unionism in India will depend in its early stages upon the close co-operation of British Labour. The formal legislation legalising the right of the workers to combine is not yet forthcoming. To secure the necessary continuous co-operation between Indian and British Labour is the task of the Workers' Welfare League of India, which has been duly accredited by the Indian Trade Union Congress as its representative. The interests of Indian and British

Labour are bound up by their economic relations. If by any chance continued unwisdom, apathy or arrogance on the part of British Labour drives the Indian Labour or mass movement into open hostility against them, British Labour will have to be prepared for evil days. The extent and rapidity of the development of the movement in India will at the beginning depend upon the sincerity and support which the British workers give to the Indian movement, but very shortly afterwards the united and full strength of the organised Indian masses will play no small part in the British Labour struggle for its economic emancipation and independence.

The spirit of the international movement is conspicuously in front of the Indian organisers. At considerable cost to their popularity they have steadfastly differentiated between the international solidarity of Labour and the non-co-operative movement as a temporary political weapon in India against the imperialist exploiter. The question of international affiliations is already much agitated among the active leaders of Indian Trade Unionism. In Indian eyes the Amsterdam International is largely discredited by its imperialist associations; and at present the balance of opinion leans towards the Red Trade Union movement. It is doubtful, however, whether the movement is yet ready for international affiliation. In the meantime the present breakdown of political imperialism throws a great part to play on Indian Labour. Any set of conditions that would allow this imperialist political fight to lead to the partition of nations into water-tight national compartments, even in the realms of economic inter-relationship, would be a disaster to all the small countries like Great Britain who must economically depend upon the outside world for raw materials as well as for markets for finished products. The only solution for the workers would be to let the political disruption take its own course as a side issue, and to take immediate steps for an economic consolidation of interests of the working classes of all nations and countries.

## B. THE EMPIRE AND THE REVOLUTION \*

The fact that in spite of its general bankruptcy Capitalism is still holding its own in the Western countries proves that as a world-dominating force it has not reached such a state of decay that its immediate collapse is inevitable. Since the period when Capitalism entered upon its last and most highly developed stage—imperialism—its stronghold was no longer confined to the industrially advanced countries of Western Europe. In imperial expansion was found a way out of the ruinous effects of over-production. Of course, it was a temporary solution bound to prove equally ineffective to save the capitalist mode of production from eventual collapse under its own contradictions. But the fact is that, until to-day, imperial expansion and exploitation do render strength to Capitalism to maintain its position in Europe.

The great imperialist war shook the very foundation of the capitalist order in European countries: had the leading members of the victorious combination not had the access to other sources of recuperation, the European bourgeoisie would have had much less success in defending the citadel of the capitalist State than is actually the case. This source of strength lies in the imperialist character of the present-day Capitalism, which holds in its hands the entire control—economic, political, and military—of the whole world, and thus finds itself in a position to put up a stiff and continued resistance against the proletariat in the home countries. The existence and power of the Western bourgeoisie do not any longer depend wholly and exclusively on its ability to wring the greatest amount of surplus value from the labour-power of the workers in the home countries. The imperial right of exploiting the vast non-European toiling masses and markets has supplied and still supplies it with an additional *modus vivendi* and a weapon to defend its position at home, in spite of the apparent precariousness and impossibility of maintaining its power there for any length of time.

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As the result of the war the world finds itself divided into two great colonial empires belonging to two powerful capitalist States. The United States of America endeavours to assume the supreme and exclusive right of exploiting and ruling the entire New World; while Great Britain has annexed to her empire the greater part of the continents of Asia and Africa. A third imperialist factor, Japan, also aspires to become formidable; but in spite of her considerable local importance in Eastern Asia she has still to play second fiddle to one or the other of these two great rivals. Then Continental Europe, owing to its utter economic ruin, financial bankruptcy, and industrial dislocation, is bound to become a politico-financial dependency of either of those two great imperialist powers, which are preparing for another giant struggle for world domination. The power of the American bourgeoisie has not been very seriously affected, except in that it has to withstand the repercussion of the severe blows received by Capitalism as a social institution. On the contrary, the control of world finance, the monopoly of the British capitalist for a century and a-half, is transferred to a great extent into the hands of the American capitalist class, which cannot be said to have reached the period of decay and degeneration as yet. In order to consolidate its newly acquired world-power, the American bourgeoisie inclines towards keeping temporarily away from the infectious ruin of Europe. Thus the British bourgeoisie becomes the supreme ruler of the Old World and the backbone of the capitalist order in Europe.

Now, where does the source of strength of the British bourgeoisie lie? Judging from the industrial conditions obtaining in the British Isles during the last years, it will appear that had its resources been limited exclusively to the productivity of those islands and the consumptive power of continental Europe, the capitalist order in Britain would certainly stand on the very brink of collapse. But despite all the chronic contradictions of the order, the contradictions that put almost insuperable difficulties against reconstructing the industrial fabric of the home country on the pre-war basis, the capitalist

class of Britain does appear to be losing its grip on the State power. It is still very firm in the political saddle, because the economic ground within its wide range of operation has not become unreliable. It still succeeds in deceiving one section and coercing another of the proletariat. By foregoing a part of the rich fruits of colonial exploitation, the British bourgeoisie is able to corrupt the upper strata of the proletariat—to create a Labour aristocracy which not only becomes a willing protagonist of imperialism, but constitutes a bulwark of reaction in the home country. Nor is this reactionary role of the bought-up Labour aristocracy confined within national boundaries: the British Labour Party is the main pillar of the Second International as well as of the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions. The possession of a vast non-European colonial empire with unlimited resources of raw material, labour-power, and markets, on the one hand, makes British Capitalism considerably independent of continental Europe, but on the other provides it with the means to turn the latter practically into its economic dependency. British capital to-day has a very wide scope of action. The economic and industrial development of the rich and thickly populated countries of Asia would supply it with new vigour. There are great possibilities in these countries, particularly India and China, which will provide cheap labour-power and new markets not to be exhausted very soon. Let those who fondly think that the bankruptcy of Germany will destroy more than a third of Britain's industries remember the saying, "If the Chinaman's shirt-tail is lengthened by six inches the textile production of the world will have to be doubled." The consumptive power of the teeming millions of India is also immense.

The post-war readjustment of the economic relations between the various parts of the Empire show that the British bourgeoisie—at least the forward-looking section of it—has not been slow in finding the necessity of falling back on its reserve forces. By means of the projected system of imperial preference, the British Empire is to become a self-contained economic unit, whose existence will not be seriously threat-

ened by the economic and industrial conditions in other countries. On the contrary, this self-contained economic unit will establish domination over the rest of the world, which must become more or less dependent on it. Thus the success of the scheme of imperial federation will not only stabilise the position of the British bourgeoisie, but will react upon the international situation. Entire Europe may become an economic dependency of this federation, but Capitalism as a social institution will have its lease of life renewed. This being the case, it is of great importance that the development of the forces contributing to this scheme of capitalist reconstruction be studied with an application not less than is devoted to the problems concerning Europe.

Never has it been more necessary to remember the truism that the world transcends the boundaries of Europe and America. After turning the centre of modern civilisation into a heap of ruins Capitalism is seeking new fields of activity. If it succeeds in this attempt the European proletariat may sink into abject degeneration instead of revolution. The bourgeoisie is trying to beat a clever retreat, which should be cut off if the world revolution is to develop. In view of the fact that the power of international capital is rooted all over the globe, anything less than a world-wide revolution will not bring about the end of the present order and the triumph of the Western proletariat. The struggle of the latter, in order to be successful, must be co-ordinated with the revolutionary action of the toiling masses of the lands subjugated by capitalist imperialism. In its efforts to extricate itself from the vicious circle Capitalism entered the stage of imperial expansion and exploitation, thus bringing huge armies of colonial workers under its domination. By turning the peasants and artisans of the subject countries into mostly agriculture and partly industrial proletariat, Imperialism reinforced its position, but at the same time brought into existence another force destined to contribute largely to its ultimate destruction. This being the case, the overthrow of the bourgeois order in Europe, which order to-day is supported by colonial exploitation whose possibilities are not yet ex-



hausted, will not be realised, as is commonly believed, alone by the advanced proletariat of Europe. It is necessary to secure the conscious co-operation of the working masses and other available revolutionary elements in those colonial and "protected countries" which afford the greatest economic and military support to Western Imperialism, and which are the most developed, economically, industrially, and politically.

India occupies the foremost place in this category of colonial countries. She has not only been a powerful pivot on which British Imperialism rested, but the scheme of developing her resources intensively and extensively with the co-operation of the national bourgeoisie will, if realised, help British capital to stabilise itself for the time being. And this possible stabilisation of the British capitalist class will react upon the continental countries in a way which is not very encouraging. Therefore, a clear understanding of the socio-economic conditions as well as the political movement in contemporary India becomes necessary for the leaders of the Western proletariat.

The point of view that the peoples of the East, because they are not in general on the same economic and political level with Western countries, can be reckoned as one and the same social unit with identical problems to solve, is erroneous. The Eastern countries vary greatly in their political, economic, industrial, and social conditions, consequently their problem is not the same, and the movement in those countries will not develop along a uniform line. Whereas in the Mussulman countries of the Near East the religious fanaticism of the ignorant masses and the anti-foreign sentiments of the land-owning gentry can be counted upon, though only to a certain extent, as a force which can be directed against imperialist domination, these elements no longer possess the same political significance in India, where a radical economic and industrial transformation has taken place during the last quarter of a century. In the Near Eastern countries the exploitation of imperial capital has not penetrated deep enough to bring about a fundamental change

in the social organism. The economic structure of these countries is still predominantly feudal, and the influence of the clergy is strong. But the same thing cannot be said about India, which since a considerable time ago has been brought fully under the extensive, if not intensive, exploitation of capital mainly imperial and partly native (the latter has been growing very fast in the last years). Feudalism has been destroyed, not by means of a violent revolution, but by its long contact with the modern political and economic institutions that are the reflex of the most highly developed capitalist State. There has come into existence in India a national bourgeoisie, which more than thirty years ago began its historical struggle for the conquest of political power from the foreign ruler; and a proletarian class, including a huge landless peasantry, which grows in number and class-consciousness in proportion to the rapid industrialisation of the country. Consequently, the revolutionary movement in India to-day does not rest upon the religious fanaticism of the ignorant masses, which fanaticism is fast losing its potentiality owing to the economic transformation of the society, nor does it rest upon the abstract conception of nationhood, an idea reared upon the imaginary unity of interest of the entire people, and not taking into consideration the class division which is becoming more and more clearly defined as a result of the development of native capitalism. Indian capitalism promises to be an ally of imperial domination rather than a revolutionary force. The liberal bourgeoisie, which stands at the head of the National Democratic Movement, cannot be expected to play the same revolutionary role as was done by the European middle class in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The bourgeoisie in India becomes a revolutionary factor only if its economic development is altogether impossible under imperial rule. But post-war imperialism depends more upon finance than upon industrial capital. Since, for the interests of imperial capital, the colonial country has to be industrialised, the native bourgeoisie cannot be any longer excluded altogether from this feast of exploi-

tation. This peculiar economic situation deprives the Indian bourgeoisie of the possibility of playing a revolutionary role. The conditions for a pure bourgeois revolution do not exist in India. The national struggle is not a class struggle. The national bourgeoisie is not pitted against an old order of social production. The weak native bourgeoisie finds it more profitable to ally itself with the imperialist power in return for such changes in the political and economic administration of the country as will permit it greater opportunities for developing as a class. Imperial capital, for the reasons stated above, is not averse from giving the colonial bourgeoisie such opportunities. In fact, the new policy is already introduced in India, and it has had its effects on the political movement for national liberation. The class-cleavage in the Indian society has become evident.

The object of this new colonial policy is, first, to check the movement for national liberation, and second, to draw upon the reserve forces in order that capitalism can hold its own in the home countries. The enormous extent of these reserves forces is visualised by few in the revolutionary camp, although our enemy seems to be fully cognisant of it. It is hardly understood that if Imperialism succeeds in carrying through the new policy the Central European proletariat may be reduced to the state of a colonial coolie. While Capitalism is spreading out to the far-off corners of the earth to save itself from the ruinous effects of the imperialist war, it is a monumental mistake for the revolutionary proletariat to stake its future on its success in Middle Europe. This blunder arises out of a provincialism, from which deplorable trait the leaders of the international proletariat must free themselves ere long.

### **C. THE NEW TREND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM \***

The outstanding feature of the Indian Nationalist Movement during the last half year has been a swing to the right. The

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programme of militant mass-action, inseparably involved in the Non-Co-operation campaign, has been definitely replaced by constitutionalism. Every tendency of a revolutionary nature has been repudiated. The leadership of the National Congress has passed over into the hands of the upper middle class, whose programme is not to boycott the Government, but to make the way clear for negotiations which will eventually lead to a compromise with Imperialism. The object of the Congress, under the new leadership of the Swaraj Party, has been declared frankly to be the realisation of Dominion status within the Empire. The pseudo-parliamentary institutions known as the Reform Councils, heretofore boycotted by the Non-Co-operators, have been proclaimed by the new leadership to be the most useful field for nationalist activities.

Last year, when the Congress was still controlled by the followers of Gandhi, the right wing, under the leadership of C.R. Das, brought forward the demand for the repudiation of the council boycott. In the Gaya Congress of December, 1922, this resolution was defeated. The right wing, which refused to abide by the Congress decision, constituted itself into a new party within the Congress, known as the Swaraj Party, and began to agitate for the removal of the ban upon the councils.

The new party was composed of the upper middle-class elements within the Congress and therefore counted among its ranks some of the ablest and cleverest politicians in the Nationalist Movement. The orthodox Gandhists, on the other hand, had nothing concrete to offer which could give new impetus to the movement. They could only repeat the worn-out formulas which had been found miserably impotent in the field of practical politics. By roundly-repudiating the militant action of the masses, the Gandhists had forfeited the confidence of the latter. The once-powerful Non-Co-operation Movement had become nothing but a dramatic show. Inactivity and disintegration characterised the movement at this period. Divorced from the masses, the Nationalist Movement had become once again a purely middle-class affair. Under such

circumstances, it was but natural that those leaders who could give out a programme calculated to further the interests of the bourgeoisie should carry the Congress with them.

This is precisely what happened. After half a year of bitter recrimination, it was decided to call a special session of the National Congress at Delhi. This met in the middle of September and gave its verdict in favour of the Swaraj Party. The ban on the councils was raised, and the Congressmen were allowed to contest the coming general elections. This constituted a complete victory for the upper middle class, which is very closely connected economically and ideologically with the big capitalists and landlords, and signalled the defeat and demoralisation of the petty bourgeoisie which had led the Non-Co-operation Movement. The victory of the Swarajists was all the more decisive inasmuch as most of the outstanding figures of the Gandhist wing, which stood for the continuation of the council boycott, came to an open or tacit understanding with the right wing. Mohamed Ali, the chief lieutenant of Gandhi and leader of the Khilafat Movement, himself called upon the Congress to sanction the removal of the council boycott. He even intimated that he did so with the authority of Mr. Gandhi.

The Special Congress at Delhi marked a turning point in the entire movement. The petty bourgeoisie, which did not find its own interests reflected in the new programme, could not agree with the new leaders, neither could it develop a programme of its own which might command a hearing in the Congress. Had the petty bourgeoisie been bold enough to revive the original Non-Co-operation Programme with full consciousness of its revolutionary significance, they might have re-captured the leadership of the Congress. That is to say, they could have held their own only if they had had courage enough to fall back upon the masses, in order to fight the right wing.

But this is too much to expect from the petty bourgeoisie. It, however, remains a fact that this element, dissatisfied with

the Delhi decision, provides a fertile field for the propaganda of revolutionary nationalism.

The two months following upon the Delhi Congress were marked by the election campaign for the new Reform Councils, this campaign being the only sign of nationalist activity. In view of the fact that the six million people constituting the Indian electorate, out of a population of three hundred and twenty million, belong to the propertied upper classes, rich intellectuals, and peasant-proprietors closely related to the landlords, those seeking election could not but commit themselves unequivocally to the defence of the interests of these elements. Therefore, the election campaign has brought out clearly the true nature of the Swaraj Party, which to-day controls the leadership of the National Congress.

Cleared of all the froth and foam of sentimentality with which Mr. C. R. Das originally clothed it, the programme of the Swaraj Party (and therefore of the Congress) has for its main planks : (1) Dominion status; (2) Parliamentary opposition, with a view to forcing the Government to negotiate with the "representatives" of the nation; (3) Protection of private property and development of native capitalism; (4) Defence of the landed aristocracy; (5) Protection of the Native States; (6) Decentralised government.

The methods proposed for the realisation of this programme are eminently bourgeois. Constitutional opposition has become the main pivot of the movement. The plan is to capture a majority of the elective seats, then to bring in a resolution on Self-Government. If the Government rejects the resolution, a policy of obstruction will be adopted to make government through the councils impossible. This all sounds quite plausible until we examine the facts. First, the Swaraj Party, though scoring notable victories in the elections just terminated, have failed to capture more than about a third of the seats. The conquest of a majority, upon which hangs the success of the entire plan, will be possible only when the bourgeoisie as a class stands solidly behind the Congress, that is, when the Congress has become quite frankly the representative of the

upper classes. Secondly, a parliamentary majority, even when secured, will be of no avail unless the Congress is ready with a plan of extra-parliamentary action at the time when, as is inevitable, its resolution is rejected. The two cannot go together because extra-parliamentary action implies a revolutionary movement based on the masses—a movement which will not be tolerated by the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the logical evolution of the new Congress programme will be full-fledged constitutionalism, which means going back to the stage which existed previous to the inauguration of the Non-Co-operation campaign in 1919.

Though the Swaraj Party has failed, in the recent elections, to secure anything like a majority, a number of its candidates have gained seats at the expense of the prominent moderate and loyalist leaders. The men at the head of the Swarajists could not have had any illusions about the results of the elections; they knew quite well that they could not obtain a majority by themselves. Therefore, already before the election campaign was fully begun, they sought coalition with the left wing of the Liberal Party—the former leaders of the National Congress and representatives of the big bourgeoisie and progressive landlords.

Although such a coalition has not been formally accomplished, the parliamentary fraction of the Swaraj Party will be strongly diluted by out-and-out bourgeois members, who have been given the stamp of the Party during the elections in spite of the fact that most of these men never took any direct part in the Nationalist Movement. Their adhesion has been bought at a rather high price, since they do not subscribe to the tactics formulated by the Swarajists. In order, therefore, to retain them in its fold, the Swaraj Party will have to modify its parliamentary tactics. Thus the plan of “wrecking” the councils, of which so much has been talked, becomes totally problematical, since first of all there is no Swarajist majority, and, secondly, those who have been elected as Swarajists do not all unanimously subscribe to these tactics. What then can be left to the Congress led by

a party in such an equivocal position, but to become, for all practical purposes, a party of the bourgeoisie, given over to constitutional agitation with the object of driving a bargain with Imperialism?

This shifting of the Nationalist Movement on to purely bourgeois grounds leaves the lower middle class and the masses out in the cold. But unrest is still acute among these elements, and the cause of this unrest cannot be removed short of a complete revolution. With the shattering of all its illusions, one after another, the petty bourgeoisie is in a pitiable condition; but there is a large unruly element within its ranks, the element which was the original vehicle of revolutionary expression in this country during the first period. These are the de-classed intellectuals, with absolutely nothing to lose but their prejudices. The collapse of the Non-Co-operation Movement and the reversion of the Congress to the old methods of constitutionalism have thrown these revolutionary elements back on their own resources, which, however, are not very great. They have returned to terrorism, which time and again has proven itself futile.

But the idealism and determination of this element are undeniable. Given a well orientated political leadership they are sure to give a better account of themselves. In view of the intellectual backwardness of the masses, it becomes historically necessary that the initial leadership of a truly emancipatory movement should come from these de-classed intellectuals. The cadre of a working-class party must be recruited for some time from its ranks. The clarification of the class-character of the Congress has made this task easier. The rapid development of bourgeois nationalism is dissipating many reactionary social and economic doctrines, which have until now confused the vision of the lower middle class of India.

Along with its contemporary, the Non-Co-operation campaign, the Khilafat Movement has also died of inanition. The dangerously reactionary tendencies embedded in this movement gradually paralysed its superficial political efficacy, and since last year led up to the religious and communal conflicts



that have of late assumed such serious proportions in India as to put the nationalist leaders at their wits' end. Particularly in the northern provinces, where the Moslem population predominates, communal conflicts have become a veritable civil war, which is backed by the reactionary elements of both communities and deftly encouraged by the Government.

This logical development of the extreme fanaticism aroused by the Khilafat Movement led to the organisation of the All-India Hindu Sabha, in which all the reactionary tendencies of the Hindu community are crystallised. The avowed object of this Hindu organisation is the defence of its own community. Many prominent Congress leaders take an active part in supporting this reactionary Hindu Movement—a fact which has given a handle to the Moslem clergy, landlords, and loyalist officials in their attempt to show up to the Moslem masses the "irreconcilable" hostility of the Hindus. A spirit of fanaticism, fomented by intense agitation for the defence of religion and social tradition, such as the Khilafat Movement called forth, can be easily diverted in any direction from which the attack upon religion is alleged to emanate. The Khilafat Movement has thus degenerated into a revival of the acute rivalry between the two great Indian communities. The result, so far as the Nationalist Movement is concerned, has been disastrous.

On the other hand, the bottom has been knocked off the Khilafat Movement as such by the march of events in Turkey. When the news filtered through that the Turks, who have been held up as custodians of the Khilafat, have themselves repudiated this antiquated institution, the task of maintaining the enthusiasm of the Indian Moslems on this issue became more and more difficult. Then it is not generally realised that very few of the real leaders of the Moslem community adhered to the Khilafat campaign. They merely "lay low" until the enthusiasm of the masses, aroused by quite other causes than the "Khilafat wrongs," but exploited by Khilafat enthusiasts, had subsided. These leaders have now started a campaign in favour of reconciliation with England. They have revived the old arguments, namely, that Moslems are

in a minority in India, and that self-government on the principle of popular representation will put them under Hindu supremacy. Therefore, they argue, Moslem interests should be treated as a separate issue. Attempts made to revive the All-India Moslem League, which was a rival organisation to the National Congress until its absorption by the latter after the Lucknow Compact of 1916, are but other indications of the exceedingly shallow foundation upon which the "Hindu-Moslem unity" (founded upon the Non-Co-operation-Khilafat agitation) rested.

The leaders of both communities stand dismayed at the turn of events, which anyone with an ounce of foresight might have foreseen. Being unable to find a solution, they evade the issue, while the bitter communal conflict eats into the very vitals of the Nationalist Movement. The only solution of the present impasse lies in the total abolition of separate communal organisations, such as the Khilafat and Hindu Sabha, and placing the agitation among the masses more on a nationalist than on an extra-nationalist or communal basis—more upon the economic struggle than upon religious fanaticism. It is only by pointing out the identity of their class interests, as distinguished from sectional or communal ones, that a real and permanent unity can be established by the Indian masses.

This fact is strikingly demonstrated by the development of this semi-agrarian, semi-religious movement of the Sikhs in the Punjab, which developed as a local or rather a provincial issue, due to the failure of the National Congress to place it on a nationwide basis. In this case, too, the bourgeois leadership sabotaged at every step the revolutionary tendencies of the movement, thereby seriously weakening its immense potentialities. The Sikh peasantry responded to the cry for "Reform of the Shrines," in the hope of gaining access to the temple lands. The Shrine Reforms Committee, controlled by the lay landlords (as distinguished from the clergy they were seeking to oust from control) and capitalists, did its best to confuse and sidetrack the dynamic forces of mass action

that underlay and gave strength to the entire movement. While the rank and file were demonstrating their firm determination to carry on the fight to a finish, the Committee entered into negotiation with the Government and the Shrine authorities. Hoping to arrive at a compromise, the Committee suspended practically all militant activities, whose efficacy had been the only means of inducing the Government to negotiate. The latter was not slow to seize upon this internal weakness of the movement and rebuffed the Reforms Committee's overtures towards an understanding.

The result was a schism in the movement. The most militant section launched on a premature campaign of violence, which could only take the form of spasmodic and entirely ineffectual terrorism. The Government came down upon this element with the heavy hand of repression. On the other hand, its attitude towards the other elements in the movement likewise stiffened. The Reforms Committee started once more a campaign for mass demonstrations against the action of the Government. The latter replied by declaring the whole movement to be illegal and putting it under ban. More than three hundred of the most prominent Sikh leaders were arrested, including all the members of the Reforms Committee, while the organs of extremist Sikh opinion were suspended and their offices closed. The Government dared to take these drastic measures, which met with little or no opposition from the Nationalist Movement, because it judged the situation correctly. The National Congress, torn by communal and factional strife, was not in a position to come to the aid of the Sikhs; even had it been strong enough to do so, it had never understood the revolutionary significance and potentialities of the Sikh Movement, and would have opposed them, had it done so, even as it opposed the mass movement that threatened to overwhelm the constitutionalism of the Non-Co-operation Movement. Under no conceivable circumstances will the Congress, as at present constituted, subscribe to the slogan of "Land to the Peasant", which is the only objective cry for the Sikh Movement if

it aims to hold its own against Government persecution and to realise its programme of Reform of the Shrines.

The programme of political independence, placed before the National Congress last year and repudiated by its leaders, has been taken up by a considerable section of the left wing, and a definitely worded resolution brought before the provincial conference of the United Provinces this year, defining the Congress objective as being "complete independence from all foreign rule," was adopted by a large majority. A study of the nationalist Press makes it clear that the ideology of the Indian movement is undergoing great changes towards the Left, no less than towards the Right. While until recently the programme of the National Congress was characterised by vague generalities about "Swaraj," to-day there is no political party in the country worthy of the name that does not contain clauses in its programme concerning the social and economic welfare of the masses. In every province, large masses of the petty bourgeoisie are looking for a new leadership. The slogan "Alliance with the Workers and Peasants" is rapidly gaining ground. A prominent Congressman, in moving the resolution on Labour Organisation in the Provincial Conference just referred to, came out openly and denounced the National Congress as the organ of the bourgeoisie, and called upon the revolutionary nationalists to throw in their lot with the masses. An ever larger body of opinion in the country holds to the idea that mere political freedom, without a complete social and economic revolution, will be a meaningless and futile phenomenon.

Thus the struggle against Imperialism is ever widening, and the element of class-conflict is being ever more clearly revealed and developed within the framework of the Indian body politic, as the political ideology becomes clarified and the Nationalist Movement divides itself into two streams—one "constitutional" and compromising; the other, by dint of economic pressure, ever more revolutionary and uncompromising in its struggle against a two-fold enemy, Foreign and Native Capitalism, which tend to unite in the end. Upon the future development of this struggle, and its ultimate outcome,

hangs the fate of the three hundred millions of the Indian proletariat and peasantry.

### **D. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BOMBAY STRIKE \***

One hundred and fifty thousand mill operatives, including thirty thousand women and children, have been on strike and locked-out of the textile mills of Bombay for nearly three months. All the mills of the district, eighty-three in number, are closed down. The question at issue is the payment of the annual bonus to the operatives, in addition to their usual wage. In July of last year, the owners put up a notice that the usual bonus, received by the operatives during the last five years and regarded by them as a form of supplementary wages, would not be paid. The men did not heed the notice, most of them being illiterate, and it was not until the end of the year when the bonus became payable that they realised the issue at stake. A strike was declared in the middle of January, followed immediately by a lockout on the part of the owners, in an attempt to force the men back to work unconditionally.

The monthly wage of a Bombay mill operative is 35 rupees for men, 17 rupees for women—for a ten-hour day. This sum is insufficient to maintain their bodily health and strength, or to provide them with the most elementary necessities. For this reason, during the height of the post-war boom period when mill profits soared to several hundred per cent., the annual bonus was granted as a form of supplementary wages. The cost of living has risen (according to official figures) 58 per cent. since 1914; profits have risen from 674 lakhs of rupees in 1917 to 1,559 lakhs in 1921, with a slight falling-off in 1922-23. The cotton mill workers are proverbially underpaid and overworked, with the result that they are always heavily in debt to the money-lender. Their right to organise into trade unions is not legally recognised; they have no regular labour organisations and no union fund. Their leaders, up to the time

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of the present strike, were drawn from the ranks of the bourgeoisie—lawyers, politicians, philanthropists and professional labour leaders, who were closer in interests and sympathies to the employing class than to the workers. They sabotaged every attempt to strike on the part of the latter; they took the part of the employers in every decisive issue; they used their influence to keep the men at work and satisfied with the old conditions instead of attempting to better themselves. The Government, which affects to maintain its neutrality in labour disputes, has never hesitated to call out armed police and military to aid the employers in guarding their property and crushing a strike.

Thus every institution and condition was against the success of the present strike, as it has been of previous ones. Yet the textile workers of Bombay have maintained their struggle for three months in face of all odds; they have remained peaceful and nonviolent in the teeth of the most open provocation; they have repudiated their old leaders and elected new ones from their own ranks to present their demands before the Government and the employers; they have endured with marvellous fortitude the sufferings of hunger and privation throughout the whole of the strike period. They have never wavered in their demand for the payment of bonus as a prerequisite for returning to work; they have maintained their solidarity of front against the efforts of the employers to seduce a part of them back to work, and against the sabotage of the Government and the public, which has refrained from giving them any concrete help during the long and bitter dispute.

The textile workers of Bombay are dying in the streets from starvation. Their January wages, already earned before the declaration of the strike and lockout, have been illegally withheld by the owners. The grain dealers and provision shops have long ago refused them credit. They are unable to pay their rent for the miserable rooms in which they huddle by tens and dozens in the infamous Bombay Chawls (tenements). The workers have never possessed any material resources to

carry them from one day to the next, nor any central fund to maintain them in time of strike. They are sticking to their demands in the face of slow starvation. Appeals to the public for material help and to the Government have met with no response. *The charitable associations of Bombay are all controlled by the Mill Owners' Association, and have refused to give aid to the strikers.* The Legislative Councils, both national and provincial, have made no move to come to the assistance of the sufferers. The Indian National Congress, which in each of its annual sessions since 1916 has pledged its support to the cause of Indian labour, refused to sanction the granting of a sum for supplying grain or credits to the starving strikers. The All-India Trade Union Congress, which presumes to lead the struggle of the Indian workers against the employing class, has never so much as mentioned the Bombay strike, nor sent one of its office-holders to the scene of the struggle to investigate and guide it, not issued a single appeal on behalf of the starving strikers. The Fourth Annual Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress, which was scheduled to be held on March 7, the very day on which the workers of Bombay were being shot down by the guns of the police and military, *deferred its session indefinitely because of internal quarrels and factional disputes among its office-bearers.* When it finally met on March 14, it broke up in a rain of abuse and a free-for-all fist fight, without so much as giving one thought to the cause of the 1,50,000 striking mill hands of Bombay, or of identifying the All-India Trade Union Congress with the greatest industrial struggle that has ever been waged in India.

The British Labour Government and Labour Party, which rule the destinies of the Indian people to-day, has limited its interest in the fate of the starving Bombay workers on strike for a living wage to a statement in the House of Commons that the matter "has been left to the Government of India." While in Britain the Dockers' strike, the tram and bus strike, and other threatened strikes have been subjected to the immediate and closest scrutiny of the Government, which spares

no efforts to bring them to a speedy and satisfactory solution, in India an industrial dispute affecting the welfare and very lives of 1,50,000 workers, to which must be added the count of their families and dependents, and reaching out in its consequences to the very shores of England in its effect on the Lancashire textile industry, has been allowed to proceed for *three months* without a motion to interfere on the part of the Labour Government or a gesture of sympathy or solidarity on the part of the Labour Party.

*The British Labour Government and the British Labour Party have permitted the striking and locked-out mill hands of Bombay to die in the streets from starvation, to be shot down by the rifles of armed police and military, without using their supreme power as head of the British Empire to bring this strike to an end and to secure victory to the just demands of the Bombay workers.*

What are the facts of this strike? In what way is it proceeding, and what will be the result of a defeat of the workers, both in India and in Great Britain?

The present struggle is more than a mere demand for payment of bonus on the part of the workers. It is an offensive on the part of Indian capitalism (which includes both Europeans and natives) against the Indian working class to reduce still further its already pitifully low standard of living. It was intended to follow up the refusal of the bonus with a cut in wages. The comparative lull in the textile industry was seized upon by the owners as a favourable moment to cut into the wage-bill, which had been slightly raised during the boom period in response to the rise in the cost of living and the consequent strike wave that visited Bombay in 1919. Such an offensive had already taken place in Ahmedabad, where the workers were forced to accede. The Bombay mill owners were prepared to close down for a short time to force the men to submit to the new conditions. The strike of the operatives in January was promptly replied to by the declaration of a two-week lockout. It was held that this period would suffice to bring the men to their knees. In spite of



the opposition of their so-called leaders, who tried by every means to persuade them to resume work unconditionally, having failed in all their efforts to prevent the strike, the workers instinctively realised that more than the bonus was at stake—if they yielded, the next attack would be directed against their wages. Therefore they held firm, and the lockout had to be extended for two further successive periods of two weeks. At the close of each one, unsuccessful attempts were made by the owners to reopen the mills with blackleg labour. Signs were posted, saying that if the men would resume work the owners guaranteed not to reduce wages, but nothing was said about the bonus. The men held out, and at the end of six weeks the owners began to feel the effects of the complete stoppage, and division arose in their own ranks. At a meeting of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association, a strong Indian minority were for granting the demand for bonus, but a slight majority against it carried the day. *In the battle between Lancashire and Bombay, in which Lancashire textile products are protected at the expense of native industry, it is the Indian workers who must pay the difference in a lower wage bill to permit the Indian textile industry to thrive.*

At the end of six weeks in response to the urgent demands of the workers and the pressure of public opinion, the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, who had refrained from taking any action calculated to bring the dispute to a close, appointed an Inquiry Committee with power to investigate "the customary, legal or equitable claim of the men to payment of bonus." This Committee had neither power to recommend nor to arbitrate; despite the request of the workers, no representative of labour was included among its members, appointed from the prominent capitalists and Government henchmen of Bombay. It was a move to gain time, by appearing to do something, and to drag out the negotiations until the workers would be forced to surrender. This Committee held three sittings, extended over a period of two weeks. Appointed on February 29, it published its findings on March 12, five days after the events of March 7, when protest meetings

of the strikers were fired upon by the police, resulting in five killed, four wounded and thirteen arrests. The decision of the Committee caused no surprise, given its nature and composition; it declared that : "The mill workers have not established any enforceable claim, customary, legal or equitable, to the payment annually of a bonus," .... and that "the results of the working of the mill industry as a whole for the year 1923 are such as to justify the contention of the mill owners that the profits do not admit of the payment of a bonus." Would that the mill workers of Bombay could say to their Christian rulers: "I asked for bread, and you gave me a stone."

On March 7, just before these findings became public, a notice was posted on all the mill premises to the effect that : "To all workers willing to resume work unconditionally, the mills will be opened for resumption of work on March 8, and two days later the January wages will be paid." The notice was signed by S. D. Saklatvala, Chairman of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association. The result was the tragic and, till present writing, unexplained events of March 7, when in reply to some stone-throwing on the part of assembled groups of strikers gathered together to discuss the notice, police fire was opened without warning on the unarmed crowd, killing five and wounding four. Thirteen workers who attempted to loot a grain shop were arrested.

This brutal massacre, which would have been unthinkable in Britain, and which roused a storm of indignation in the Indian public mind, was brushed aside by the Bombay Government with the single statement in the Bombay Legislative Council on March 8 that "the Government desire to offer their sympathy to the victims, particularly in view of the very creditable behaviour of the men hitherto .... Military patrols have been called out, but it is hoped that it will not be necessary to use them unless absolutely essential to preserve law and order." Asked by a member if there was any loss to property as a result of the acts of the strikers, the Home Member replied : "I understand there has been some window breaking and some looting in the mills. But so far *I have no information of any serious injury to any of the mills.*"

Human life may be held cheap in a country inhabited by 320,000,000 souls, but in the interests of what assumes itself to be "civilised government" it might have been expected that an official inquiry would be undertaken into the reasons for an order to shoot, on the sole authority of a deputy police inspector (European), in the absence of a magistrate, and before the crowd had been warned to disperse or blank shots had been previously fired into the air. Can mere stone-throwing on the part of justly-aggrieved men in the face of the most intense provocation be held to justify the calling out of armed police and soldiery and the shooting into an unarmed and defenceless mob? Are industrial Amritsars to be repeated all over India with impunity under the aegis of a Labour Government?

The events of March 7 precipitated long-delayed action on the part of the Bombay Government, and the Mill Owners' Association was informed by His Excellency that : "January wages should be paid at once without affecting the question of bonus and irrespective of resumption of work by the men, and that the mill owners should meet the representatives of the men to discuss the questions at issue." It should be remembered that this tardy step to effect negotiations was made two months after the beginning of the dispute which had plunged 1,50,000 workers, together with their wives and families, into the direct distress and the whole industrial life of Bombay into an abnormal state. Would a similar strike of such dimensions have been allowed to drag out its course in Lancashire without some action being taken by the Labour Government?

Yet still another month has been allowed to pass without any decisive action being taken to bring the dispute to a close. The latest reports bring news that the striking operatives, exhausted and starving, have appealed to the Government for help to assist 50,000 of them, with their wives and children, to be repatriated to their villages, where they hope to find some kind of work. Fifty thousand have already found their own way back to the country districts—the remaining ones, three times fifty thousand at the least if we count those dependent

upon them, remain in Bombay to fight it out to the end, performing casual labour, subsisting on precarious charity, or dying outright in the streets of Bombay. The Government has been asked to provide them with some form of work to enable them to survive the struggle. A few of the smaller mills are reported to have opened, to which a few thousand men had straggled back to work. But the overwhelming majority remain firm to their voluntary pledge to abstain from rejoining the mills until their original demands have been met. Nor theirs is the cry of the British proletariat, "Work or maintenance." To claim such a boon as their right is beyond their humble dreams. They know only how to do that which is within reach of their own human endurance—to resist the capitalist offensive dumbly, peaceably, uncomplainingly, but with what worlds of determined fortitude, until either their cause is won or they themselves are no more. There is something truly Indian in this infinite capacity for suffering; in this strength of the meek to resist injustice even unto death. What scorn of human life it expresses—or of human existence reduced to a status lower than the beasts!

The British Labour Party, in power to-day as the British Labour Government, has it within its means to save the Bombay workers from death by starvation and from the lingering existence which exploitation renders worse than death. It can send material help to support the starving strikers, and it can demand arbitration of the dispute in a manner fair and just to the cause of the Indian working class.

Upon the outcome of this strike hangs the fate, for the next few years, of the Indian textile workers in their heroic struggle for a living wage. *And upon the payment of a living wage to the Indian textile workers depends the future well-being of the textile workers of Great Britain, whom the Indian workers are being forced, against their will, to undercut.* The Bombay strike is but another instance of the fact that the international proletariat must hang together or they will hang separately.

## E. THE EMPIRE AND THE PROLETARIAT\*

Speaking at Baku, several weeks ago, Mr. A. A. Purcell, the head of the British Trade Union delegation, declared that on returning home the delegation would organise a "Hands off Egypt" movement, to prevent British Imperialism from throttling weak and defenceless Egypt. This attitude taken on behalf of the militant proletariat contrasts remarkably with the official view of the Labour Party on this grave question. The Labour Party wants the Anglo-Egyptian conflict to be referred to the League of Nations. It appears that even this view will not be pressed much. In fact, judging from the lukewarm speech of Mr. MacDonald, the Labour Amendment to the King's Speech will only "express regret at the way His Majesty's Government is handling the Egyptian situation." The scrapping of the 1922 agreement and grabbing of the Sudan are a *fait accompli*. The Baldwin Cabinet has not left any room for doubt that the suggestion of League arbitration will not be heeded. In these circumstances it matters very little how the Labour amendment is worded. But the official Labour Party attitude cannot be very exigent, because Mr. MacDonald's stern refusal to place the dispute before the League, as proposed by Zaghlul Pasha, is too recent to be forgotten. The uncomfortable knowledge of their own complicity in the imperialist aggression in the valley of the Nile does not permit the Opposition Front Bench to voice the feeling of the working class, as was done by Mr. Purcell.

Whatever may be the official attitude of the Labour Party, the seriousness of the Egyptian question is undeniable. Egypt groans under the iron heel of Imperialism. The semblance of national self-government, grudgingly conceded to cope with the dangerous revolutionary crisis of the post-war years, is brushed aside. Lord Allenby rules in Cairo. The formidable military might of Britain is turned

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upon a weak and defenceless people. The Government, headed by the "Father of the Egyptian people," is turned out because it dared take exception to some of the atrocious demands of Imperialism. Egypt is placed in a state of siege. The annexation of the Sudan is complete.

As long as Egypt is subordinated to a foreign military dictatorship, she will claim the right of rebellion. The right of the Egyptian people to complete independence is undeniable. The recognition of the right of a particular people to determine its own political status definitely rules out all outside interference under any pretext. Since the Agreement of 1922 terminated the British Protectorate only in name, it could not deprive the Egyptian people of the historically recognised right of rebellion against foreign or native oppression. We should consider it superfluous to prove that the sole object of the conquest and protectorate of Egypt was not altruistic. Nor was the "sacred responsibility" of protecting the Egyptians and safeguarding the Sudanese "accidentally" thrust upon Britain, as the imperialist historian, Seely, would argue. Nevertheless, a brief recapitulation of facts will be useful.

Until the fifties of the last century, British merchants, side by side with the French and Italian traders, penetrated the valley of the Nile. The growth of commercial interests whetted their appetite for political power. The indebtedness of the Khedive Ismail Pasha to the French and British bankers grew to the amount of two and a half milliard francs. Ismail extended the Turkish suzerainty up the Nile to Nubia, and built Khartoum and other cities. These "civilising" efforts of Turkish Imperialism were financed by the European bankers. Presently the latter thought it would be much more profitable to eliminate the intermediary and let "civilisation" march under the insignia of the Cross instead of the Crescent. The Christian Shylocks demanded their money or their pound of flesh, which was to be a mortgage on the sources of the State revenue. Ismail refused the terms of financial capitulation. In order to remove

this obstacle from their way to political power, the Franco-British Debt Commission engineered a "revolt" against Turkish suzerainty. (By the way, if the Zaghlulist Government fomented the anti-British movement in Sudan, as it is accused, for its own political purpose, it learnt these tactics from the European imperialists.) Ismail was deposed and succeeded by Tewfik Pasha—a nominee of the Anglo-French creditors—who accepted unconditionally the terms of financial capitulation. The tale sounds very familiar. Under the aegis of Imperialism in the backward countries history repeats itself remarkably. The drama staged at Cairo sixty years ago is being enacted all over again to-day.

Under the pressure of the Debt Commission, the new Khedive dismissed a large number of army officers and government employees whose loyalty to him and his Anglo-French masters was open to doubt. This was done on the pretext of economy. The traders were taxed heavily to increase the revenue, which was mortgaged to the Debt Commission. Discontent against the new regime, openly acting under the dictation of Anglo-French banks, became widespread. The Egyptian Nationalist Party was organised. The following passage is found in the first manifesto of the Nationalist Party, published in 1868 :

"The British Lion has a voracious appetite. But it does not kill its prey. It lets them live, to relish their blood and flesh bit by bit. The treatment meted out to our brothers in India awaits us. Poor Egypt is doomed. Better death than such a life. Let us rise, we the Servants of God. Egypt for the Egyptians!"

This does not sound like the voice of a happy people, gently led on the path of "civilisation." Obviously it was the frantic cry of those led to the slaughter. These backward barbarians have no sense of gratitude. They are still speaking the same language. Fifty years of fleecing could not make them, appreciate the benefits of civilisation.

Among all the innumerable boons conferred upon Egypt by Britain is counted the abolition of slavery. In 1874, the

Britisher Gordon was appointed Governor-General of the Sudan. In those days, the principal trade of that country was that of ivory, coming from the wild regions of Central Africa. Gordon declared the ivory trade a state monopoly; consequently he had to declare the abolition of slavery, which was connected with the ivory trade. Italian and French merchants were competing with the British in this trade. By abolishing slavery, the competitors were deprived of practically costless labour on the one hand, and the declaration of state monopoly, on the other hand, diverted the entire trade to Cairo, there to fall exclusively into British hands. There was a third and more insidious motive. This was to drive the Sudanese slave-owners and ivory-traders to revolt, so that British intervention could take place. All these sordid motives of the "saintly" Gordon were realised. The discontented Sudanese established relations with the Egyptian Nationalist Party headed by Col. Arabi Pasha. The situation, carefully prepared, came to a head. The time was ripe for military intervention and occupation.

In 1881 the Nationalist revolt broke out in Egypt. Simultaneously, the Sudan rose in revolt under the leadership of the Mahdi. British and French fleets bombarded Alexandria, in May, 1882. A joint note was presented to the Khedive, demanding the resignation of his Cabinet and the exile of the Nationalist leader Arabi. But popular demonstrations, on the contrary, forced the Khedive to appoint Arabi as Minister of Defence. The rebels were outnumbered by the invaders; Arabi's forces were defeated, and he was taken prisoner at Tel-el-Kebir.

Egyptian soldiers refused to join the expedition to reduce the Sudan, where the whole country was in revolt. Gordon was besieged at Khartoum. So the Egyptians did not want the British invaders to conquer the Sudan for them. Gordon died not for Egypt, but in the attempt to suppress the revolt of the Sudanese against the British invaders. Neither in Egypt, nor in the Sudan, has England, therefore, any right but that of an invader, who conquered by means of dirty intrigues and clever stratagems. It is this right of might that



is being defended to-day by the Tory Government, and which yesterday was also defended by the MacDonald Cabinet. It is this clear issue between the victor and the vanquished, exploiter and the exploited, that the Labour Party urges should be referred to the League of Nations, while the League by its very constitution (the Wilsonian Covenant) is pledged to leave these "internal" issues of Imperialism outside its scope. Not only has the British Government roundly rejected all suggestion of League intervention, but the League itself has washed its hands of this thorny problem. Once more it has proved itself the "organised impotence" it really is. What does the Labour Party propose to do now?

British domination acquired in the valley of the Nile by all means, fair or foul over a period of half a century, was by no means abandoned by the agreement of 1922. Not an iota of British authority was conceded. The "independence" granted to Egypt by that agreement was utterly inadequate. This Camouflaged form of Imperialism could not be legalised until the approbation of Zaghlul Pasha was secured, after the attempt to set up several dummy governments had failed. Zaghlul and his party accepted the "independence" only as the basis of further negotiation. Had they not kept the fundamental questions of military evacuation and the Sudan open, they could not have carried the people with them in this compromise. But the policy of following a line of evolution with the agreement of 1922 as the basis created an ambiguous situation which could not continue indefinitely. The political career of Zaghlul was staked on his problematical ability to win complete independence for Egypt and the revindication of the Sudan through amicable settlement with Britain. No government in Egypt could permanently hold the forces of National Revolution in control which was not able to secure satisfaction on these points. If anybody in Egypt was at all in a position to attempt this impossible task, it was Zaghlul, owing to the enormous popularity and unlimited confidence that he enjoys. Had not the professions of the British bourgeoisie and of the Labour Government for an amicable

settlement of the Anglo-Egyptian conflict been hypocritical, the Zaghlulist regime would have been supported. But, on the contrary, egged on by insatiable imperialist greed, it was the Labour Government which finally rendered the position of Zaghlul untenable.

The revolutionary wing of the Nationalist Party, which since the days of Arabi has worked for the overthrow of British Imperialism, did not approve of Zaghlul's compromise with Britain. But their faith in the sincerity and ability of the veteran leader induced them to let Zaghlul try his policy of conciliation and gradual acquisition of power. The latter is too shrewd to ignore the precariousness of his position. The advent of the Labour Government was seized upon by him as a possible way out of the predicament. But Mr. MacDonald did not permit the reminiscence of personal friendship with the Egyptian leader to interfere with imperial stakes. His treatment of the Egyptian question could hardly be improved upon by Lord Curzon. The Labour Government sowed the seeds of the Chamberlain Ultimatum. Sitting on the Opposition Bench, the official leaders of the Labour Party are not absolved from the crime against the Egyptian people—a crime which they share equally with the present Tory Cabinet. The rupture of his conversation with Mr. MacDonald exposed the bankruptcy of Zaghlul's policy of peaceful national evolution within the frame-work of the British Empire. If even a Labour Government, with all its professed regard for self-determination and democracy, could summarily dismiss the proposal of military evacuation of country presumably "independent," and of an appeal to the League of Nations, how could the policy of reconciliation be maintained? The alternatives were clear before the Egyptians: either to submit themselves to perpetual British domination, thinly disguised as "independence," or to fall back upon a permanent state of warfare, suspended temporarily to give the Zaghlulist policy a chance. It is hypocritical for the official Labour Party leaders to demand, in their capacity of His Majesty's loyal Opposition, the submission of the Anglo-Egyptian

conflict to the League of Nations while, in office, they refused to take a similar step, and thereby wrecked all the possibility of constitutional advance.

If the attitude of the Labour Party in the Egyptian question has been so hypocritically ambiguous, as regards the Sudan it has been frankly imperialist. Even today the official leaders of the Labour Party are not prepared to oppose the British annexation of the Sudan. It is argued that the Sudan is not Egypt, the Egyptians have no claim on that country. But have the British capitalists anything more to do there than the Egyptians ? If conquest is the foundation of right, the Egyptians, who conquered the Sudan much earlier than the British, possess the benefit of priority.

But the question of the Sudan rests upon entirely different ground. A huge amount of British capital has been invested in the Sudan, which is expected eventually to make the Lancashire textile industry independent of the American cotton ring. The Mkouar Barrage on the Blue Nile alone has cost £13,500,000, which was raised in the London market with the guarantee of the Government. Britain is determined to stay in the Sudan in order to protect this huge vested interest. All talk of protecting the Sudanese from Egyptian aggression, of rescuing them from chaos and of bringing them the blessings of civilisation, is hypocritical. Expansionist interests of British capital demanded the pacification—a plausible term for subjugation—of the Sudan, which was done mainly at the cost of Egyptian lives and Egyptian money, ostensibly on behalf of Egypt. Gordon, Kitchener, Cromer and the innumerable others who carried the banner of British Imperialism up the valley of the Nile were supposed to be conquering the Sudan for Egypt. Thus, the sovereignty of Egypt over the Sudan was clearly recognised from the beginning. But this academic recognition is repudiated as soon as it even slightly conflicts with the monopoly rights of British capital in the Sudan.

This ticklish question of cotton supply is cleverly manipulated to make the interests of the British working

class appear identical with those of Imperialism. Taking their cue from the imperialist-economists, trade union bureaucrats, like J. H. Thomas and J. R. Clynes, have of late been holding before the workers the terrible disaster that will befall British industry if those parts of the Empire which supply the metropolis with raw materials and food break away. The moral of this is that the proletariat must give fullest support to imperialist expansion and, consequently, to the policy of militarism and coercion like that in the valley of the Nile. So the Labour Government "firmly" handled the Egyptian question, not because it was a minority government, but because the official leaders of the Labour Party are convinced of the necessity of maintaining imperialistic domination over Egypt and the Sudan.

Normal economic security of the British proletariat does not depend, as Mr. Clynes would maintain, upon the maintenance and expansion of the Empire. The British working class will derive no profit from the cotton-plantations of the Sudan. As far as the life and prosperity of the Lancashire textile industry are concerned, it can be said that if the cotton required could be up till now bought from America, there is no reason why it cannot be bought from Egypt and the Sudan in future, if necessary. If the dependence of Lancashire upon American cotton did not necessitate the British conquest of the United States, free access to the actual and potential produce of the Sudan does not necessarily demand the military occupation of the valley of the Nile and political subjugation of the Egyptian people. It is argued that British evacuation will throw the Sudan back into disorder. That is only an hypothesis. There is absolutely no reason to believe that the peoples subordinated to imperialist domination for decades will not follow a steady and normal course of development if all foreign interference ceases. Besides, to secure the provision of cheaper cotton, which will increase the profits of Lancashire industry, is no justification for the outrages committed against weak and defenceless peoples.

Apart from political and historical reasons, economically Egypt is inseparable from the Sudan. If a union of peoples on economic grounds is desirable for the evolution towards the Co-operative Commonwealth of the World, the union of the entire valley of the Nile into one economic organism is much more reasonable than to hold the Sudan perpetually as a source of raw materials for the Lancashire cotton industry. The Egyptians have more than enough reason to look upon the British invaders with distrust. Their contention that from the Sudan, British Imperialism can strangle the economic life of Egypt, is not altogether groundless. It has been borne out by the decision to extend unlimitedly the scope of the Gezira irrigation. In fact, this irrigation work, which constitutes the pride of "civilisation" introduced in the Sudan by Britain, is a standing menace to Egyptian agriculture. The enormous volume of water that will be held up by the gigantic barrage, to irrigate 4,00,000 hectares of desert, will undoubtedly reduce the flow of the lower Nile, on which Egyptian agriculture depends.

The disquiet of the Egyptians on this score cannot be pooh-poohed, while Britain feels the same disquiet about the Gezira irrigation. Measures have been taken that the water supply of the barrage will not be cut off higher up in Abyssinia. Already in 1902, Britain signed a treaty with King Menelik, binding the latter not to permit any construction on the Blue Nile or its source, the Lake Tsana, which might affect the flow of water. The question was again raised in 1921, in view of the events in Egypt and of the growing French influence in Abyssinia. Britain's new demands approximated to serious encroachment on the sovereignty of Abyssinia. The latter, under French inspiration, retorted by applying for admission into the League of Nations. Some agreement is supposed to have been reached, at least temporarily, when last summer the Abyssinian Regent, Ras Tafari, visited France and England. Mr. MacDonald was the custodian of British imperialist interests in those days. Did he prepare the way

for the eventual annexation of another small country to the Empire ?

British domination in the valley of the Nile is of much greater importance than to safeguard the local capitalist interests, which by themselves are enormous. Egypt is the strategic centre of the Empire. This point was bluntly made by a number of noble lords during the debate on the King's Speech in the Upper House. Certainly it is. But here again, how does this consideration, vital for the master class, concern the proletariat ? India is becoming more difficult to govern every day. The Moslem peoples of the Near East find in the Union of Soviet Republics a staunch supporter of their relentless resistance to imperialistic aggression. Young China, also inspired by the Russian Revolution, challenges British supremacy in the Far East. The Empire is indeed in danger. Therefore, imperialist interests demand that in this fateful moment the half-way house of Egypt should in no way be shaken. This is the paramount consideration that indicates the policy of a "firm hand" in the valley of the Nile. The eventful necessity of crushing a revolution in India, or of sending a "punitive expedition" to recalcitrant China, or of keeping the Turks within "reasonable" bounds of nationalist ambition, is no inducement for the British workers to shed their blood on the deserts of Africa, or to sanction that the taxes paid by them shall be squandered in a military adventure. The benefit of the Empire is no less a myth for the British proletariat than for the subjugated peoples. The doctrine of carrying the blessings of civilisation to the backward peoples is a blatant lie. The theory that the disruption of the Empire will ruin the British working class is an economic fallacy.

Not only is the Empire of scant benefit for the British workers; it is a veritable bondage for them. Firstly, they have to pay for its conquest and maintenance in men and money. Secondly, the Empire only consolidates the power of capitalism at home. The beggarly share in the colonial plunder, in the shape of unemployment pensions (which

the capitalists would have ceased to pay long ago had they not been in a position to draw enormous super-profit from the colonies), and the shameful glory enjoyed by the treacherous leaders "who sit by the King," are poor compensation for the working-class support of Imperialism.

The question of Egypt and the Sudan embodies the entire question of Imperialism—of the right of colonial expansion at the cost of the liberty of the so-called backward peoples. The British proletariat must approach and solve this question as such. Once and for all, they must decide whether it is their duty and responsibility to support the perpetuation of the Empire. An economic union of the countries now forming the British Empire cannot be realised within the capitalist system, unless the union is to be a capitalist union to oppress and exploit the working class. The Empire must first be broken up. Then such a union will be possible on a Socialist basis. The desirable preservation of the present industrial organism, freed from capitalist ownership, is dependent on the ability of the British proletariat to win the confidence of the subject peoples. The desire to transform the Empire into a voluntary economic commonwealth will never be realised so long as the political and racial distrust bred by imperialist aggression remains. All talk about the "Commonwealth of Free Nations" is justifiably distrusted by the subject races. How can British Labour convince the colonial peoples of its good intentions if it fails to give unconditional support to their demand for freedom, even to the extent of breaking altogether away from the Empire?

Therefore, it is neither the half-hearted demand of the official Labour leaders for a reference to the League of Nations, nor hypocritical resolutions of the I.L.P., that express the verdict of the proletariat in accordance with their objective interests. Mr. Purcell's pledge to organise direct action against imperialist violence in the valley of the Nile indicates the way the British working class should follow.

## **F. INDIAN POLITICS—AN ANALYSIS\***

### **Present Tendencies in India**

The death of C. R. Das, the leader of the Swaraj Party, came at a critical moment. For India at the present time stands before a new stage of political development. That is the explanation of the present spectacle of confusion in Indian politics, a confusion not merely obvious to outsiders, but apparent and alarming to the central figures on the Indian political stage. During the crowded experience of the post-war years many changes have taken place, which have served to demonstrate clearly the nature of the class forces involved in the play of Indian politics, and which have culminated in the present position of complete bankruptcy of Indian nationalist politics on existing lines. The collapse of the non-cooperation movement, as led by Gandhi, marked the end of one stage in development. The crisis which is now threatening the Swaraj Party, which took the place of Gandhi's movement as the representative movement of Indian nationalism, marks the end of another stage. Much to the surprise of the Swarajists themselves the logical conclusion of their policy is showing itself to be a relapse to liberal politics. It has been apparent to all that C. R. Das was recently angling for a possible reconciliation with the British Government. His policy was supported by other Right wing leaders such as Mr. Motilal Nehru, and there were even faint indications of a response from Great Britain, in so far as a modification of the Indian Constitutional Reform Scheme was the chief point at issue. Meanwhile the rank and file of the Indian nationalist movement stand aghast before the collapse; while new forces, in particular the slowly growing force of organised labour and the more rapidly growing appreciation of its importance, indicate that an entirely new situation is gradually emerging.

\* Written by Clemens Dutt, Published in : '*The Labour Monthly*' July 1925, London.



### **The Economic Bases**

To obtain a proper appreciation of the various factors which have determined the present situation, it is essential to examine the economic bases of Indian politics. In the light of such knowledge, the developments which have caused such confusion and uncertainty in the minds of the chief protagonists stand clearly explained, and it is found, indeed, that the whole history of the last five years, including Gandhism and its inevitable collapse, and "Swarajism" and its relapse into moderatism, could all have been predicted with astonishing accuracy. In spite of the vaunted "spirituality" of India, and of the mysticism which is supposed to be such a feature of the Indian mind, the effects of economic factors seem to be more clearly demonstrable in India than even in materialistic Western Europe. The reason for this is, perhaps, to be found in the very evident economic exploitation that has always been the background of British domination in India, and in the consequent tug-of-war of various British and Indian commercial interests which is so largely responsible for the reality of Indian politics.

These various interests can be roughly characterised as follows. On the British side, we have a practically united front in defence of British interests. The prime concern of British administration in India, and of British capitalist politicians at home, is, naturally, the protection of the interests of British imperialist capitalism in India. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in an illuminating phrase, recently spoke of "our duty to our imperial position, to our kinsfolk in India, and to a thousand millions of British capital invested in India." Behind British rule, therefore, stands British capitalism, and the concern of the one is the interest of the other. That phrase of a thousand millions of British capital investments in India is worth noting also by those Indians whose conception of British capitalism and its relation to India seems to be limited to the competition of the Lancashire textile industry. In the present stage, foreign capital investment is playing a far more important part than is the dumping of foreign manufactures or the draining of raw materials.

On the Indian side, the two great bulwarks of British domination have always been, firstly, the passive acquiescence of the vast mass of 300 million ignorant exploited workers and peasants; and, secondly, the active support of the few million titled tools and mercenaries constituting the Indian landlord class and aristocracy with its hangers on. Besides these, a number of new forces have gradually come into prominence, and it is, of course, just this continuous development of new social classes, and the antagonisms resulting therefrom, that renders vain any hope of establishing a state of equilibrium in the tug-of-war of interests such as to allow of the perpetuation of the *status quo*.

First in class consciousness, if not in ultimate importance, is the rising Indian capitalist class. They are already strong enough to challenge successfully the British claim to exclusive exploitation of India, but they fear their own workers too much to dare risk an attempt to throw off the British connection. Next comes the ever-increasing educated middle-class, professionals, intelligentsia and petty-bourgeoisie with much less to lose and much more to gain from a thorough-going policy of India for the Indians. As a social force, however, they count for little, for taken as a whole they are weak, incapable of self-reliance, hesitant and timid. The crucial factor of the present day is the emergence of a class-conscious working class. The capitalist transformation of India creates out of the masses a modern homogeneous proletariat in defiance of the traditional limits and differences of castes, sects and races. They form the advance-guard of a movement which will eventually put an end to the dumb passivity of the peasant millions. More and more of the latter, whose poverty and exploitation continually increases, are day by day thrown into the ranks of the wage labourers.

### **The Political Parties**

As yet the working class is practically unorganised. The various political parties, however, reflect pretty accurately the economic needs of the other sections we have men-

tioned. Thus the Liberal or Moderate party voices the interests of the landlords and more substantial Indian capitalist. At one time they dominated the National Congress, but they were soon swamped by the swelling influx of the petty-bourgeoisie. During the rapid period of development during the war and immediately after, British capitalism was ready to make big sacrifices to secure the loyalty of the Moderates. As a matter of fact very little was required, the promise of assistance for the development of Indian industry and the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of Constitutional reform sufficing for the purpose. The reforms drew off the big bourgeoisie from the National Congress, which was left in the hands largely of the petty-bourgeoisie. The latter, under the leadership of Gandhi, with his banner of non-violent non-co-operation, attempted to put themselves at the head of the growing movement of the masses, but, as in so many analogous cases in European history, they succeeded of course only in betraying it. The final collapse of Gandhism took place in February, 1922, when the Bardoli Conference renounced mass civil disobedience, but for two years afterwards Gandhi's followers conducted a losing struggle for the old negative programme. The revolutionary crisis, however, was past, direct action was out of the question, and the active nationalists could less and less content themselves with preaching Gandhi's version of Tolstoyanism. The important bourgeois section that had not been rallied to the Moderate banner by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were determined to use the Councils as a new field of activity. They formed the Swaraj Party in December, 1922, in defiance of the Gandhist majority in the National Congress, but in the course of the next two years they obtained the ascendancy also within the Congress itself.

### **The Swaraj Party**

The history of the Swaraj Party is an illuminating chapter in the history of Indian nationalism. It illustrates the

development of a peaceful constitutional opposition, an ordinary "Redmondite" nationalist party, from a bellicose party which entered the Councils with the sole intention to obstruct, to wreck and to destroy. In this transformation the Swaraj Party has shown itself true to the character of its leadership and the nature of the electorate it serves. It is definitely a bourgeois nationalist party, and its prominent figures are practically all connected with capitalist and landlord interests. The electorate constitutes a small fraction of relatively well-to-do elements, numbering hardly 2 per cent of the population, and in enlisting their support, a task which the Swarajists found more difficult than they expected, little attention could be spared for the desires and needs of the remaining 98 per cent.

The Swaraj Party was formed with a view to the elections held at the end of 1923. Just in the nick of time they received the benediction of the National Congress at a special session of the latter. Naturally their first programme was a radical one, thunderous in its demand for responsible government, and declaring, in the actual words of the text, for "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction within the Councils, with a view to making Government through the Councils impossible." Except in the Central Provinces, however, they did not obtain a majority, and this simple objective had to be abandoned. Their first step was to bargain for the support of a section of the Liberals. By the terms of this bargain the forty-three Swarajists in the Central Legislative Assembly received the support of some twenty-four Liberals on condition that obstruction should only be resorted to if there was no response from the Government after a reasonable time to a resolution demanding a reform of the constitutional machinery. This demand was moved and carried in the Legislative Assembly in February, 1924, by seventy-six votes to forty-eight. There was, of course, no response, and obstruction was at last entered on by refusal of supplies—the throwing out of the Budget. The rejected

measures were, of course, all restored by use of the Viceroy's power of certification. Even this obstruction, however, proved too unconstitutional for the Liberal "Independents" who had entered into coalition with the Swarajists. This year, when the time for the annual display of obstruction came round, the Independents discovered that it was not logical to refuse supplies, when the vote was rendered powerless by the Viceroy's prerogative, unless it was backed up by recommending the people not to pay taxation. Accordingly, this year the Independents refused to vote with the Swarajists and the Finance Bill was passed.

The renouncement of the original Swarajist policy of obstruction is naively explained in an official statement of the party issued in May, 1924. It states :

"Our position is really not so much one of "obstruction" in the parliamentary sense as that of resistance to the obstruction placed in the path of Swaraj by the bureaucratic Government."

A transparent cloak for the confession that they had returned to the paths of ordinary constitutional opposition.

A further change of policy also took place, of considerable interest as laying bare in the clearest possible way, the class character of the Swaraj Party. Originally the party was pledged not to accept office, to serve on Committees, or to move resolutions and introduce Bills. This was an unnecessary limitation for a constitutional party representing capitalist interests. Thus we find that the manifesto above-mentioned declared that the Swaraj policy "must in future be more and effectively directed to the varying needs and problems of our national life." Accordingly, the programme was modified so as to allow of the introduction of "resolutions, measures and Bills necessary for the healthy growth of our national life." No clearer proof is required that by national interests the Swaraj Party understands Indian capitalist interests than to note that the use made of the above decision was for Swarajists to serve on the Government Steel Protection Committee, and to vote for

the Steel Protection Bill, granting an enormous bounty to the Tata steel interests without a thought for the conditions of the exploited steel workers.

### **The British Labour Government**

It should not be forgotten that some measure of responsibility for the stultification of the Swaraj Party lies at the door of the British Labour Government. For years India has been ground down in suffering under the political oppression of Tory imperialism. Some Indian nationalists were disposed to see signs for hope in the coming of a Labour government. But an ominous presage was the letter of Mr. MacDonald, rightfully interpreted as a threat, the meaning of which was to be made clear in the nine months' regime that followed. The British Labour Government changed nothing at all. It was made clear that there was to be no advance towards self-government, no freedom for the thousands of political prisoners, no introduction of political liberty, no relaxation of military autocracy, no amelioration of the lot of the millions of workers and peasants. It demonstrated the complete identification of the British Labour Government with the interests of British capitalism. Further, the Labour Government was responsible for the addition of two measures of the first importance to the long list of crimes against Indian political freedom. The first was the Cawnpore Communist trial (in which a pioneer group of Indian Communists were convicted on a charge of "waging war against the King" for the crime principally of receiving political letters from Mr. M. N. Roy), which struck a blow at the very possibility of working-class political organisation. The second was the Bengal Ordinance, the virtual introduction of martial law in Bengal, which served as an excuse for the arrest and imprisonment without trial of the Left wing leaders of the Swaraj Party. The effect was two-fold. It finally killed the possibility for "civil disobedience" and in so far assisted the Swarajists. But it made the Swaraj Party itself

helpless before the ascendancy of the Right wing. The Swarajists were driven into the hands of the capitalists and into the paths of barren constitutionalism. Nor has there been any real change since the fall of the Labour Government in the British Labour attitude. In spite of the hopeless bankruptcy of the sham constitution, Lord Olivier still maintains that there was "no *prima facie* case" for the Labour Government even going so far as to set up a Royal Commission. Colonel Wedgwood, in a letter to Lajpat Rai, speaks as if the Swarajists had betrayed the Labour Party rather than the reverse. He notes that there is in the labour Party :

"A growing feeling of being completely out of touch with the Swarajists and out of sympathy "Just another set of self-seeking bosses." is the feeling prevalent."

The Indian nationalist press could, perhaps, be pardoned for hinting that the same description might be more aptly applied to their experience of the British Labour Government.

### **The Reversion to Liberalism**

At the present time the Swaraj Party clearly stands before a crisis. Its relapse into moderatism means that there is now very little difference between Swarajists and Liberals. This is evident in such accessions to the party as Mr. P. C. Ray, Secretary of the Calcutta National Liberal League, who recently declared : "I do not now find any material difference between me and Mr. C. R. Das in regard to our political objectives, or in the methods of obtaining them." The fact, also, that such a typical loyalist as the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri could say that he "was very near the end" of his membership of the Liberal Party, and was "inclined to be a Swarajist." throws a clear light on the present tendency of the party. The only point in reality that separates the two parties is that of obstruction on principle. If the Swarajists were only to give that up, the last distinction would be gone and the Liberals and Swarajists together could co-operate

with the British administration in securing law and order and promoting measures for "the healthy growth of the national life." But for such docility, the Swarajist leaders would expect some tangible reward, notably positions of greater responsibility that can be given by the present puppet Councils. It is to this bargain with the Government that the Swarajist leadership is now tending. Mr. C. R. Das, in particular, was advancing step by step in this direction, and at the end it seemed that very little would suffice for a complete "reconciliation" between him and the British Government. To show his readiness, he had not merely emphasised the ideal of Dominion status as the whole goal of the nationalist movement, he had not only taken every opportunity to denounce violence and all forms of revolutionary activity, but he went out of his way to utter panegyrics on the British Empire (that "free alliance" and "great Commonwealth of Nations" as he described it at the recent Faridpur conference), and to declare how little was wanting for him to undertake to begin to co-operate with the Government. Speaking in the Bengal Legislative Council in March, 1925, on the motion for the rejection of the Ministers' salaries he declared

"I am not opposed to co-operation, but co-operation is not possible under this system. Honest co-operation cannot be offered now because the system does not allow it. It can be done when you have improved your system, when there is real give and take, when there is anxiety on the part of Government to relieve the distress of the people, to recognise the rights of Indians."

Again, at the Bengal Provincial Nationalist Congress he declared with regard to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms:

"If there was a chance for self-government under it I would co-operate. If some real responsibility were transferred, I would co-operate. And he affirmed his confidence that he could see "signs of a real change of heart" on the part of the Government."



It is clear that the major aim of the Swaraj Party under the leadership of Das became to strike a bargain with the Government for the reform of the reforms. Up to now the Government has only gone so far as to appoint a committee, the Muddiman Committee, which has issued two reports, a majority and a minority report, both of which provide a clear exposure of the unworkability of the Act. Lord Birkenhead encouraged Mr. Das with the proposal that he should co-operate in putting down revolutionary violence, and it is currently reported that the question of a possible modification of the reform schemes is one of the objects for which the Viceroy has made his present visit to Great Britain. This is about the sum total of the signs of Government "change of heart," and there is no reason to believe that the Government will feel any need to hurry to secure another support for its rule in India by rallying the Swarajist leaders. But a bargain of some sort is inevitable, whether in the near future or not, and with it the reversion of the Swarajists into the Liberals of 1914 will be complete. But there will be this difference. The rank and file of the Swaraj Party, and the mass of active nationalists up and down the country, have passed through many experiences since 1914, and will no longer follow their leaders blindly. The rank and file are already alienated. They are not interested in the parliamentary manoeuvring. Hence a widespread feeling that the nationalist movement is at a standstill, which is not confined to the masses. The *Bombay Chronicle* speaks of a "general paralysis and stagnation." Bala Lajpat Rai speaks of "chaos and confusion." "The political situation is anything but hopeful and encouraging," he declares. "The people are sunk in depression. Everything—principles, practices, parties and politics—seem to be in a state of disintegration and dissolution."

There is, therefore, an admitted failure of the nationalist movement on all sides. Gandhi's political influence has been destroyed. He has admitted the Swarajists "defeated and humbled him." His yarn-spinning franchise for membership

of the National Congress is arousing a final revolt. At the recent Maharashtra Nationalist Conference he was openly requested to retire from politics. But the Swarajists are not much better off. A pact between them and the Government would be an open betrayal of the nationalist movement and a split in the Swarajist Party would be inevitable. It would be the old story over again, British imperialism winning the allegiance of a new set of leaders only to find that they have not the masses behind them.

### **The Labour Party**

So far the masses, the millions of illiterate workers and peasants have been entirely left out of account. True, it has become fashionable to recognise their existence. Even Mr. Das was once insistent on the need of "Swaraj for the masses, and not for the classes." But events have proved that this is nothing but a verbal trick and means nothing in practice. Several of the Swarajist leaders, however, have been genuinely dismayed at the absorption of the party in bourgeois interests to the utter neglect of interest in even ordinary labour welfare questions. With experience of contact with British Labour Party leaders in their minds, the result has been the sudden new formation of an Indian Labour party. But there are many features connected with this Labour Party which give rise to serious doubts as to its future as an organised movement. In the first place it appears to consist only of leaders, and they all members of the Legislative Assembly. Further, these leaders are mostly personalities already well-known as bourgeois nationalists, whose personal rivalries with the nationalist leaders, and general standing in the nationalist movement is unaffected by the fact that they appear as leaders of a Labour Party. Starting under these handicaps, the party is almost poisoned at birth, and could almost be written down as a mere parliamentary manoeuvre. But the need for attention to labour economic questions, not to speak of political organisation of labour, is so urgent that it would

be strange if the new party could give no help in this direction. But whether it can ever become a party of the masses, and a political organisation too, is another question. With the present bankruptcy of nationalist politics, the stage is set for a re-grouping. Supposing, however, the Swaraj Party splits, as indicated above, will the rank and file go into the new Labour Party? It is extremely unlikely. The new Labour Party cannot take the place of a nationalist organisation. It must be concluded that its function must be limited to the representation of the needs of the youthful trade union organisation. Even so, if it is to become a live organisation, representing working-class interests, its impetus must come from below, and not from above. If it limits itself to solid work in assisting trade union organisation, the political careerists will leave it, the real trade unionists will come to the fore, and it could develop into a body of real value and significance.

It must be remembered that labour organisation is still at a very elementary stage. In many respects labour conditions are notoriously the worst in the world. Labour legislation is as backward, or more so, than in China or Japan. Legislation legalising the existence of trade unions is still only pending. Not unnaturally, therefore, trade unions are only weakly developed, and the Indian Trade Union Congress has negligible power. Labour is disgracefully unrepresented in the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Councils. while existing Labour leaders are only too often merely bourgeois philanthropists, or even middle-class careerists bent on obtaining public notice or Government recognition.

### **Wanted—A Workers' and Peasants' Party**

Any Indian party which would avoid the fiasco of present nationalist politics must base itself on a social-economic programme for remedying the present disabilities of Indian Labour. Demands for adequate labour legislation, including the establishment of the rights of trade organisation, must

find a prominent place in its programme. It must concentrate its attention on housing, education and the social conditions of the people. It must fight the rent oppression of the landlords and work for the improvement of peasant conditions. So far these things have been dropped because they have been against the interests of the Indian capitalists and landlords. It will be remembered that even Lajpat Rai, now heading the Labour party, spoke more of the danger of hurting Indian industry than of helping Indian labour. The nationalist leaders have refused to advance any such programme as we have indicated, because they will not countenance an invasion of their positions as capitalists or landlords. Mr. Das called for help from public funds for the Bengal peasants. But he must have known that such help would only be swallowed up by the rack-renting landlords, and that the real help must come from a revision of the present oppressive rights of the landlords. A popular party based on a real social economic programme would lose the present nationalist leaders, but it would have the masses behind it. In championing the cause of the masses it would inevitably be thrown into the struggle against imperialism. British imperialism is the biggest exploiter of the Indian workers and peasants, and the native capitalists and landlords look on it as their ally in exploitation. Such a party, therefore, must be more than a labour welfare party; it must be a mass nationalist party. It is along these lines alone, the lines of a workers' and peasants' party, that a new nationalist party can rally the whole country to its support, and achieve national independence.

### **G. INDIA : TEXTILE WORKERS' STRIKE\***

The strike of mill hands in the Bombay cotton industry ended with the withdrawal of the notices of reduction of wages on December 1, which followed the Government's announcement of November 30 that the cotton excise would be suspended.

\* Published in : *'The Labour Monthly'* February 1926, London.

The strike, which lasted for ten weeks, was the cause of intense suffering to the 1,50,000 workers engaged. Many are reported to have succumbed in the effort to travel by road back to their villages, and many more have fallen victims to the epidemics which appeared in the slum tenements which they inhabit in Bombay. It was stated that at first the mills were resuming work slowly, but the number of hands presenting themselves was insufficient. Actually only a few thousands were ready to accept the reduced wages.

The chief excuse used by the millowners for their action in cutting wages by 11½ per cent. was the burden of the excise duty of 3½ per cent on Indian woven cotton goods, amounting to 21,000,000 rupees per year for the whole industry, of which about two-thirds is paid by the Bombay millowners. The campaign for the removal of this duty has been one of the planks in the whole Nationalist struggle for a long period, and has been especially intense since the slump set in after the post-war period of prosperity. A demand was made for its abolition by the Legislative Assembly in March of this year, and again on September 16, after the outbreak of the strike, the Government was defeated by 57-32 on a motion that the excise duty be suspended for the rest of the year. These votes, however, were ignored by the Government. Subsequently deputations from the millowners extracted from the Viceroy a promise that the duty would be removed when financial considerations permitted. Finally the Government gave way, and it was announced that the financial position was now sufficiently assured to allow of the duty being suspended from December 1, 1925. Thereupon the millowners announced the restoration of the previous wage rates, and the strike came to an end.

The leaders of Indian Labour took part in the campaign against the excise duty and, while opposing the wage-cut, proclaimed their complete solidarity with the millowners on that question. Their deputation to the Viceroy in August put forward as its chief demand that the duty be removed, on

condition that the relief so obtained be used to restore the wage-cut.

No steps, however, were taken to organise resistance by the operatives to the employers' attack, and until the last moment the Bombay leaders expressed themselves against a strike, although they warned the millowners that the mood of the men was such that a strike could hardly be averted. A few days after the strike actually broke out, a meeting of the Labour leaders was held in Bombay which "resolved that as the situation had become serious and had got out of hand the leaders should do nothing for the present, but to watch things for a week or so" (*Bombay Chronicle*, September 21, 1925).

Meanwhile they contented themselves with making unavailing representations to the Governor of Bombay.

The extraordinary solidarity and determination of the men finally compelled the assistance of the leaders, and towards the end of October a Committee of Assistance to the Textile Workers was organised representing the chief Labour organisations in Bombay, with Mr. N. M. Joshi at the head, for the purpose of providing relief for destitute and starving workers. By its help many hundreds of strikers were enabled to leave Bombay for their village homes, and towards the end of the strike over 5,000 strikers in Bombay were being given a grain allowance daily at nineteen different centres, the total-expenditure increasing to about £60 per day.

This relief work would have been impossible but for the donations that have come from the European Trade Union Movement, and it is thanks to their aid that the strikers have been helped to hold out and a great deal of suffering alleviated. The Indian trade union organisations have given such help as their meagre financial resources permitted, but the Indian Nationalists and politicians generally, in whose interest the struggle had actually been brought about, stood by without lifting a finger to give financial or other support to the strikers.

## **H. INDIAN NATIONALISM AND THE ELECTIONS\***

India is a country of 300 million inhabitants which has been on the brink of a social revolution. That fact, with all its significance for the British Empire, Asia and the world, is the dominating factor for appreciating what is taking place in India to-day. It is natural, therefore, to measure the stages of development since the war from the abortive upheaval of 1920-21. The betrayal by bourgeois nationalism of the mass movement at Bardoli in February, 1922, is the starting point of a retreat which has put the revolution temporarily in the background, but which will have the effect for its delay of making the next explosion more forceful, conscious and effective. For nothing in the central features of the situation has been changed, but there has been rapid economic development, which has produced a corresponding development in class differentiation and class consciousness.

This differentiation is expressed in the stages since Bardoli through which the nationalist movement has passed. Up to the close of the present year three such stages can be distinguished. The first period from Bardoli to the Gaya session of the National Congress in December, 1922, when the Swaraj Party was launched, was the period of retreat from Gandhism and the formulation of a new policy for bourgeois nationalism. The second period was a further stage of clarification marked by the gradual modification of Swarajist policy during its experience of parliamentarism and reversion to Liberalism. It culminated in the acceptance of Government office and the resignation from the Swaraj Party in the autumn of 1925 by Mr. Tambe, the Swarajist leader in the Central Provinces (the only provinces in which the Swarajists had a majority in the Legislature), which thus opened the new period of differentiation marked by the splitting of the nationalist ranks and the formation of new parties. The imminence of this new phase was pointed out in an article in the *Labour Monthly* in the

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\* Written by Clements Dutt, Published in *'The Labour Monthly'* December 1926, London.

summer of last year. The rapid developments of this phase will reach a conclusion in the results of the elections now being held and in the decisions of the forthcoming National Congress at Gauhati in Assam.

The economic characteristics of this period are a continuation of the preceding one. There has been a series of good monsoons, which has meant that harvests have been satisfactory (an all-important question in India, where the exploited mass of peasants have no reserve to fall back upon) and which, in the resulting absence of famine and consequent economic crisis, has allowed of the establishment of relative stabilisation. Economic development has proceeded rapidly and the policy of economic rapprochement and reconciliation between British imperialism and the Indian big bourgeoisie, determined upon by the former ever since it discovered in the first shock of the war that it would have to be dependent for vital iron and steel products on the Indian firm of Tata, has gone further ahead. Salient features of the recent period have been the establishment of the Indian Tariff Board and the abolition of the cotton excise duty. Nothing marks the new era of the development of Indian industries behind high tariff walls more clearly than this last step, for the whole history of the Indian National Congress has been bound up with the struggle of Indian capitalism for the removal of the cotton excise.

The results of the new economic situation are obvious in recent political history. Agrarian agitation, the centre of the previous mass movement, has been relatively quiescent. The Indian bourgeoisie, discovering that political freedom is not so indispensable for the furtherance of their immediate economic interests as they had previously imagined, are more disposed to be satisfied for the present with the existing constitution, and therefore to "work the reforms." At the same time, the Left Wing in the nationalist movement has become more articulate as it has begun to realise the direction in which the nationalist leaders are going. Moreover, in spite of the legal terrorism exercised against the Communists, the



Indian Communist Party has grown in strength, and sympathetic nationalist groups, such as the Workers' and Peasants' Party in Bengal, have extended their influence. A complicating political factor, which reached its maximum intensity during the last year, has been the unprecedented growth of communal conflict between Hindus and Moslems, resulting in religious riots in which thousands of persons have been killed or injured. This communal tension is closely connected with the political differences in the nationalist ranks.

### **The Electoral System**

All the factors above mentioned affect the present general elections to the Imperial and Provincial legislatures and go to make the situation more complex than at any time previously. The first elections, in 1920, were boycotted by all except the loyalist upper strata of the bourgeoisie. In the second general election, in 1923, the new Swaraj Party was the sole representative of the National Congress. Now the nationalist ranks are divided into a number of different warring parties or factions, each claiming to represent the nation and to speak in the name of the nationalist movement and the National Congress, and seeking seats and positions of power in the legislatures at the expense of its opponents. They quarrel and compete among themselves for the chance of getting into the councils, and they roundly denounce the Government for not giving them more power when in the councils, but they neglect to attack or even to notice the essential feature of the councils, viz., the enormously restricted franchise on which they are based, which make them something aloof from, and useless to, the vast body of the nation. The character of the elections, and the social composition of the membership of the councils themselves, is above all determined by the nature of the electorate. The restricted franchise is based on both communal and property qualifications. There are also special constituencies for electing representatives of Europeans, big landlords and big commercial and industrial organisations.

Take, for example, the Bengal Legislative Council. First of all, out of 139 members only 113 are elected at all. The remainder are Government nominees, the remnant of the old system in which the members of the Legislative Council were all merely "advisers" appointed by the Provincial Governor. Of the 113 elected representatives, only eighty-five are elected by general, though communal, constituencies. The whole province is divided into forty-two geographical areas forming non-Mohammedan constituencies in which no Mohammedan, even if otherwise qualified, is allowed to vote. The same province is also divided geographically into thirty-four constituencies in which only Mohammedans can vote. This separation is applied throughout practically the whole of British India, and is intended to ensure representation of the special interests of the Moslems. It, of course, considerably assists in dividing them off from the rest of the population.

The rest of the elected members, twenty-eight in number, are returned by special constituencies. Europeans, numbering less than 25,000 in a total population of 46,000,000 have five representatives. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce returns six members. The big landowners of Burdwan, Chittagong, & c., each elect a representative of their own. The Indian Jute Mills Association, the Indian Tea Association, the Indian Mining Association, Calcutta University, the Calcutta Trades Association, the Marwary Association are all reckoned as special constituencies. Most of these special representatives will be Europeans, and all will stand for big capitalist or landlord interests.

The number of voters in the special constituencies will be very small. They constitute, in this respect, something very like the "pocket" boroughs of pre-Reform England. On the other hand, the vast bulk of the workers and peasants are totally disfranchised. The property qualification for voters varies from region to region, but it is sufficiently high to exclude ninety-seven to ninety-eight per cent of the population. Take the Bombay rural constituencies as an example. The essential qualification for an elector is payment of land

revenue amounting to not less than sixteen to thirty-two rupees per annum, according to region. As the land revenue for the total assessed area in Bombay Presidency varies from half to one and a-quarter rupees per acre, it can be concluded that only cultivators of some fifteen acres or more will be entitled to a vote. Recent statistics show that three-quarters of all the Bombay holdings are below fifteen acres. All these cultivators, therefore, would be disfranchised together with the large number of landless wage-workers and agriculture labourers.

For the All-India Legislative Assembly the franchise is even more restricted. Only 104 out of 144 members are elected. All but two or three of the general constituencies are separated on communal lines. Most of the provinces have special constituencies of Europeans and of big landholders, and special representation is given to the Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau, Ahmedabad Millowners Association, Madras Indian Commerce, Bengal Marwari Association, &c.

Urban electors to the Assembly have to pay income tax (not levied on incomes below 2,000 rupees per year) or a high rate of other taxes, while the rural electors must pay land revenue of about fifty rupees or upwards. The result of the restriction is that the total electorate for all the seats in the Assembly is below a million, there being only a few thousand voters for each seat.

It must not be forgotten also that the Central Legislature includes an upper chamber, the Council of State, with sixty members, of whom thirty-four are elected. Electors to this body must be very rich or have been members of the Central Legislature or held high office in municipal government. The electorate numbers a few hundreds in each constituency. Thus in a by-election, earlier this year, in West Bengal, the successful candidate polled seventy-eight votes, the remaining three received fifty-eight, twenty-six, and one votes respectively.

Without taking any account, therefore, of the question of the authority of the councils, it is obvious that they are utterly unrepresentative in character and cannot be an index of the desires of the mass of the nation.

## ***The Break-up of The Swaraj Party***

Nevertheless, the attention of the nationalist movement has become more and more exclusively directed to obtaining control of these puppet legislatures. The forty-odd Swarajists that entered the Central Legislative Assembly in 1923 were very quickly deflected from their early intransigence. By the autumn of 1925 the desire of the Right Wing for a drastic modification of the programme, so as to allow of the acceptance of office and the practice of the so-called policy of "responsive co-operation" (i.e., the policy of working the constitutional reforms scheme as far as possible, and only voting against the Government when British policy conflicted directly with the immediate interests of the Indian bourgeoisie), led to a crisis in the party and the secessions began.

In November the Bombay Swarajist leaders, Jayaker and N. C. Kelkar, resigned and at the National Congress at Cawnpore in December, 1925, there was a definite bloc, led by the Mahrattas from Bombay and the Central Provinces and Berar, calling for a modification of the programme. The National Congress, however, in spite of its smaller numbers, represents a wider field than the electorate of the Assembly, and it endorsed the official Swarajist policy. Thereupon the dissidents seceded from the Swaraj Party and organised the Responsive Co-operation Party, which was definitely launched on February 2, 1926.

The Liberals were not slow in attempting to profit from the situation by forming a bloc with the Responsive Co-operationists aimed against the Swaraj Party. The new alliance, formed in March, 1926, was christened the Indian National Party, and it contained representatives of the Liberals, the Independents, the Home Rule League, led by Mrs. Besant (to all intents and purposes identical with the Liberals, but united in pushing the Commonwealth of India Bill), the non-Brahmins, the Muslim League and the Responsivists. The latter, however, only gave a qualified support to the new party, retaining their separate identity. The real difference of the Responsivists from the Liberals

lay only in the fact that they were still members of the National Congress, and they were aware that if they lost their connection with the Congress they would be considered purely as Liberals, and as such less trustworthy and experienced than the old Liberal leaders.

The other groups in the National Party, with one exception were outside the National Congress, and they based their refusal to have anything to do with the Congress on the ground: (1) that the present Congress creed still endorses mass civil disobedience and general non-payment of taxes as a policy for which the country should make preparation; (2) that the Congress is still dominated by the Swaraj Party which is committed to a policy of obstruction; (3) that they cannot agree to enter the Congress unless they get an adequate share of the Congress offices; and, finally, (4) that wearing of khaddar (homespun cloth) is still compulsory at Congress functions (a last rule of the period of Gandhi's domination).

The only semi-Liberal leader of note who remained within the Congress was Pundit Malaviya, who even during the most revolutionary period fought the Liberal battle inside the Congress, and who has been pressing for the adoption of a Congress programme which would embrace all shades of nationalism.

Faced with the possibility of a union of the secessionists from the Swaraj Party with the Liberals, Pundit Nehru, the Swarajist leader, attempted a compromise which would break up this union, and, by practically giving in to the Responsivists, draw them back into the Swaraj Party. This compromise was formulated in the Sabarmati Pact, signed at Ahmedabad on April 21, 1926.

The Swarajist leader, however, had under-estimated the strength of the Left Wing within his party. The All-India Congress Committee, which comprises 350 members, mostly local Congress officials who are closer to the rank and file of the Congress membership and not directly interested in the question of parliamentary office, refused to ratify the pact. They showed their distrust of Nehru also in their action

in defeating his resolution for a committee to inquire into Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth Bill. Since Mrs. Besant had seceded from the Congress over the non-co-operation issue and her scheme was being canvassed by various Liberals and other groups without the endorsement of the Congress, Pundit Nehru's action in attempting to raise the matter was a clear indication of his Right-Wing tendency, and the defeat of his resolution was a clear vote of no confidence in him.

The existence of a Left Wing within the National Congress and the Swaraj Party, which prevents the leadership from openly entering into co-operation with the Government, has been evident at all the larger Congress gatherings. Under the spinning franchise introduced by Gandhi the registered membership of the Congress dropped to about 14,000 and even though the four-anna subscription was re-introduced in 1925, the paying membership at the time of the Cawnpore Congress was still under 20,000. Nevertheless the rank and file, comprising mainly petty bourgeois elements, was sufficiently in evidence to compel the Swarajist leaders to adopt a revolutionary phraseology, to talk of the preparation of mass civil disobedience and to declare that the Swaraj Party would leave the Legislative Councils if their demands were unheeded by the Government.

It was this Left Wing that called Pundit Nehru to heel. It was this Left Wing that at the Bengal Provincial Congress in May, 1926, began an agitation against Sen Gupta, the Bengal leader, because of his Right-Wing tendencies, and even moved a resolution of protest at the disparaging remarks of the president, Sasmal, concerning the ex-revolutionaries in the Bengal Congress organisation.

The latest stage in the disintegration of the Swaraj Party has followed the fiasco of the party's method of putting into practice the resolution of the Cawnpore Congress for withdrawing from the councils.

In order to make a demonstration to impress the rank and file, and to hide their bankruptcy in policy, the Swarajist members of the Assembly and of the provincial councils made

a spectacular withdrawal in March, thus, incidentally, saving themselves the task of voting against the budget, which many of them were loath to do. It was not long, however, before the members in most of the councils were clamouring for permission to return in order to defend or oppose certain measures. Permission was given, for otherwise there would have been many defections from the party, and it is noteworthy that in all cases the walk back was openly for the defence of class interests. Thus, in the Punjab, the Swarajists returned to oppose the Money Lenders Bill, which threatened to curtail the power of the moneylenders; in Madras the issue was the Malabar Tenancy Bill, and in Assam a Land Revenue Assessment Bill

Finally, it was decided that the members of the Central Legislative Assembly themselves should return in order to oppose the new Currency Bill, and then retire again, taking no further part in the last session of the Assembly. This led to the latest split in the Party, for Lajpat Rai, the veteran nationalist and deputy-leader of the party, refused to walk out again and severed his connection with the party.

This new split meant a serious weakening of the strength of the Swaraj Party. It also gave a new opportunity to Pundit Malaviya. Under his auspices the Congress leaders, like himself and Lajpat Rai, who were in the Congress but not in either the Swaraj or Responsive Co-operation Parties, began negotiations for unity with both of the latter groups

It was obvious that Nehru was only deterred by fear of his own rank and file from attempting to conclude a revised form of the Sabarmati Pact. Accordingly it was the Responsive Co-operationists who first joined hands with Lajpat Rai and Malaviya. Early in September they decided to form an Independent Congress Party to unite the Right-Wing members of the Congress, who were outside the Swaraj Party. They adopted a resolution declaring that, since the policy of wholesale obstruction in the countries had failed, as had also the policy of "walking-out" from the legislatures, and that no basis had been found for unity with the Swaraj Party—the only course

left open to such members of the Congress as do not agree with the Swarajists' policy and programme is to form themselves into a separate party within the Congress...

"The policy of the party will be to work the legislatures, defective though their constitution is, for all they are worth and use them for accelerating the establishment of full responsible government.

"It will be open to the party to accept office, provided the power, responsibility, and initiative necessary for the effective discharge of their duties are secured to the ministers.

"The party will work in full co-operation with the Responsive Co-operation Party."

Lajpat Rai was appointed the president of the new party and Pundit Malaviya its general secretary. The formation of the new party was hailed as a triumph for their principles by the Responsivists, though they generally gave as their opinion that it would have been better for Lajpat Rai and his followers to have joined the Responsivists altogether.

### **The Communal Conflict**

The dissensions within the nationalist movement were greatly complicated by the growth of Hindu-Moslem conflict leading to a series of religious riots in all parts of the country, during which hundreds have been killed and thousands injured. The underlying causes are very complex. Apart from direct economic issues (as in Bengal and the Punjab, where Moslem peasants are to a great extent faced by Hindu landlords and moneylenders), the conflict has been closely connected with the struggle for political influence between the rival communities. This rivalry has always been fostered by the British Government, and it has been deliberately fomented by the nationalist leaders. As long as the common national revolutionary struggle was in the forefront and Government positions were boycotted, rivalry between the communities was not acute. Now, however, communal passions have been deliberately aroused



for political purposes. The leaders of each community are competing against each other for positions of influence in the councils and other bodies.

During 1925 Hindu and Moslem religious organisations developed rapidly. Most of the prominent Hindu and Moslem nationalist leaders declared it to be their object especially to defend the interests of their co-religionists. In April, 1926, Sir Abdur Rahim, a Liberal Moslem leader in Bengal, formed a Bengal Moslem Party. In May, 1926, the Khilafat Conference, which had been more or less in abeyance since the abolition of the Khilafat, enlarged its objects to embrace all the interests, temporal as well as spiritual, of Mohammedans. In June the chief Hindu organisation, the Hindu Mahasabha, countered by deciding, where necessary for support of Hindu interests, to run its own candidates at the elections. In August an Independent Muslim Party was formed through the agency of the Khilafat Committee to contest the elections on behalf of Moslem interests. It consists now largely of former Moslem Swarajists.

### **The Elections**

From what has been said it will be clear that the candidates for election to the councils and Assembly are appearing under a great variety of labels. The differences between them are, however, not very important. All of them profess to stand on a nationalist platform, and now that the most extreme Swarajist demand has been whittled down to Dominion status or even merely an encouragement for "honourable co-operation," the Swarajists do not stand so far removed from the most right-wing moderates. The parties can be divided into three main groups, representing roughly the three sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. The big bourgeoisie dominate the Liberal and National Parties; the Responsive Co-operationists and the Independent Congress Party stand for the middle bourgeoisie; while the Swaraj Party is predominantly petty bourgeois in composition and outlook.

The National Party is practically indistinguishable from the Liberals. It represents merely an election block to prevent clashing of non-Congress candidates in some regions, notably in Bombay and Bengal. As a party it was stillborn, being killed by the mutual suspicions between those in and those outside the Congress.

The Responsivists and Independent Congressmen represent the new dominant trend of bourgeois nationalist policy and, therefore, are gaining in strength. Their organisation, however, has a firm hold only in the Mahratta provinces. Both of the parties, and particularly the Independent Congress Party, are strongly pro-Hindu, and in fact, if not in profession, stand for the special interests of Hindus as against Mohammedans. They agree with the Swarajists except on the one point that they believe the national cause should be pushed by using the reforms to the full, including the acceptance of office. Naturally the Swarajists brand them as job-hunters and Liberals, and in return they retort that the Swarajist policy is bluff and make-believe and that the Swarajists are really Liberals themselves. Mr. Jayaker, the leader of the Responsivists, says :

“The Swarajists practise nothing but responsive co-operation, but refuse to call it by that name.”

In spite of being weakened by successive splits and defections, the Swaraj Party still includes the bulk of the rank and file of active nationalists. Its leaders, against their own desires, have refrained from advocating a change of policy in the hope of getting a majority in the elections. The electoral arrangements, however, between the Liberals and Responsivists, and between the Responsivists and Independent Congress candidates, have in many places prevented triangular contests, and left the elections to be fought on the clear issue of co-operation or non-co-operation. In such cases, since the bulk of the electorate consists of landlord and capitalist elements, there are bound to be many defeats suffered by the Swarajists, and their hope of a majority in the councils is rendered vain.

The great asset in their favour is their possession of the Congress machinery, and it is freely charged against them that they have used funds collected for the Congress for their own election purposes. The latest election results appear to show that in no case can the Swarajists secure an absolute majority, that in general they have lost ground, but that they have increased their representation in some places, such as Madras, where the formerly dominant moderates have been discredited through their past actions.

### **The National Congress**

Whatever the result of the elections, the coming session of the National Congress at Gauhati, in Assam, at the end of the year will witness a determined effort on the part of the Right Wing to commit the Congress to a policy of Liberalism under the guise of uniting all wings of the nationalist movement. Hints have been thrown out by prominent Swarajists that the Swaraj Party is only waiting for the result of the elections to modify its policy. If they do not succeed in obtaining thumping majorities, the Swarajist leaders will be ready to accept their defeat as the verdict of the country and adapt their policy accordingly. It will need a bold stand by the rank and file of the party if another Sabarmati Pact is to be avoided. The rank and file are opposed to the surrender policy of the leaders, for they are closer to the masses and themselves also have nothing to gain by the alliance with British imperialism, but they are disunited, confused by communal and other side issues and easily deceived by the pseudo-revolutionary phraseology used by the bourgeois leaders.

Nevertheless, there is no way forward unless they come out into the open with a programme of their own based on the class needs of the masses. The Left Wing can only rally itself around the demand for a free democratic republic. Thus the class issues are getting more defined. After the elections it is to be expected that the communal issue will cease to occupy such a prominent position, and the class issue become more pronounced. After the big bourgeoisie the middle

bourgeoisie also is forsaking the national revolutionary struggle and finding its ally in the imperialist camp. The workers and peasants will be compelled to fight their own battle and find their own allies. The latter are especially to be found outside India, where other workers and peasants are engaged in the struggle with the same enemy.

## I. THE INDIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT\*

It is commonly said, indeed so commonly that the phrase becomes mechanical, that the Indian Trade Union Movement "is still in its infancy." The present writer has frequently had occasion to combat the use of this phrase, not so much because it is untrue, as because it is misused. Every kind of mistaken policy, sheer inactivity, sectarianism, abstention from politics, are all excused on the same plea. And, on the other hand, it conveys the idea that the only policy for Indian Labour is slow, patient progress on the present lines. It is not intended to deny the truth of what is meant by the statement, namely that Indian labour organisation is poor by Western standards. But the analysis of the situation implied by it is inadequate. It is the thesis of this article that Indian unionism is in its second stage, in which it will remain until there come into being the conditions necessary for the next stage. That these conditions will ripen fairly soon is also expected, and indeed the beginnings are already to be seen.

The broad facts of the present position have recently been given very completely by Mr. Joshi in his pamphlet, *The Trade Union Movement in India*, and the figures in the table below are taken from it. Though necessarily based to some extent on guesswork they are as sound as can be obtained and are near enough in any case for the present purpose.

Of the population of just over 300,000,000, 138,000,000 are taken to be workers, divided according to occupations as follows : Agriculture, 100,000,000 ; industry, with mining,

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\* Written by Philip Spratt, Published in : '*The Labour Monthly*' in October 1927, London.

15,517,000; transport, 1,900,000; commerce, 8,000,000; domestic, 2,500,000; public services, 4,000,000. The more detailed facts are arranged under columns : (a) estimated number of wage-earning employees, (b) wage-earners in organised parts of occupation, or such as can be organised in trade unions, (c) number of unions in existence; (d) total membership.

# WAGE EARNERS AND TRADE UNIONISTS IN INDIA

Occupation	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Agriculture	25,000,000	821,000 (plantations)	—	—
Industry	12,147,000	294,000 (mining)	1	1,500
		773,000 (textiles)	18	34,000
		169,000 (metal)	8	11,000
		82,000 (glass, &c )	1	—
		(Printing,	5	6,000
		1,00,000 engineering,	5	1,000
		general)	20	15,000
Transport	1,500,000	(wood, leather, chemicals,		
		332 000 food, clothing,		—
		building, gas,		
		furniture, & c )		
		(construction)	—	—
Commerce	4,000,000	800,000 (railways,	25	50,000
		shipping,	6	20,00
		1,00,000 docks & c ,	6	3,000
		tramways)	6	2,000
Domestic	2,500,000	100,000	6	5,000
Public admin- istration	4,000,000	500,000	1	--
			60	50,000
Totals	49,147,000	4,727,000	164	196,500

The distribution by provinces is also important. In 1925 the numbers of workers in factories subject to the Indian Factories Act were : In Bengal, 551,342 ; Bombay, 370,460 ; Madras, 123,563; Burma, 97,346; U.P., 78,942; Bihar and Orissa, 73,461; C.P. and Berar, 67,104; Punjab, 53,533; Assam, 48,697. Others, 30,330. Total, 1,494,958.

Government employees, railwaymen, & c., will be distributed roughly according to population. The number of trade unionists by provinces is more difficult to state, but is approximately as follows: Bombay (June, 1927), 76,000; Bengal, probably 50,000; Madras, about 25,000; others up to a few thousands each. The total number of unions affiliated to the All-India Trades Union Congress is now 60, with 125,000 members.

It is also necessary to show roughly how the present situation is related to the past. Organisation on a large scale practically began in 1918, and at the first All-India Trades Union Congress, in Bombay, October, 1920, sixty unions were affiliated, having 140,000 members, while it was claimed that the total membership of unions expressing sympathy, &c., was 500,000. At the second Congress, at Jharria, November, 1921, it was stated that 1,000,000 affiliated members were represented. It is doubtful if these numbers were actually even approached, but it is certain that there was a very big fall after 1922. At the end of 1924, only eight unions were affiliated, but by the time of the fifth Congress, in Bombay, February, 1925, there were thirty-one unions with perhaps 80,000 members. The number has risen steadily from that time.

The more exact figures compiled by the Labour Office for the Bombay Government show the same tendency. There were in the Presidency in June, 1922, twenty-two unions with 58,000 members; in September, 1923, nineteen unions with 42,000 members; September, 1924, twenty-one with 47,000 members, and since then a fairly steady rise to the present figures : sixty-six unions with 76,000 members.

The Bombay Government commented on these facts in its criticism, dated January, 1925, of the draft Trade Unions Bill.

It cannot be denied that the progress of Trade Unionism in this Presidency is at the best stationary at the present moment...the movement seems to be able to show solid progress only in Ahmedabad. The quarterly review... is a tale of lassitude and disillusionment. The present slump in the movement is due largely to falling prices and rising wages.

The "slump" in the movement after 1922 would be better shown by statistics of industrial disputes. The period 1919-22, saw a very intense "strike wave," which fell away almost to nothing by 1924. In the character of the Congresses also, a similar contrast is to be seen between those days and the present. The first two Congresses were practically huge demonstrations. At Jharria there were several thousand delegates, and strike was held specially for the occasion in the local coalfield. Many of the bestknown political leaders of the country were present at both Congresses, and took active part. In the Trades Union Congress, which the present writer attended in March this year, the number of delegates was under fifty, not more than ten of whom were workers. Perhaps a score or so of members of the public were present, while as the place was Delhi, a few Congress leaders "dropped in," but said nothing.

Mr. R. K. Das, in his book *The Labour Movement in India* (1923), remarks that, while in the first years of intense activity the unions were mainly industrial in type, in the later period in which he was writing, craft unions also began to appear. This is an important observation, for though the unions which were then making their appearance, and by this time are the predominant type, are not craft unions in the strict sense, they do closely resemble craft unions in many ways. The figures of unions for the whole country, and especially for the Bombay Presidency, show a large increase recently in the number of unions, but a fall in the average membership, and this is characteristic.

The union movement of 1919-22, and that of 1924-27, are really quite distinct in organisation, composition, and aims, as well as in magnitude and methods. The difference has been compared plausibly with that which came about in the British movement between the 'thirties and the' sixties of last century. The former movement was the product of a period of universal instability and excitement, and was fundamentally a revolutionary response to a revolutionary situation. The economic circumstances were

enough to bring about universal discontent and protest. But the workers were also undoubtedly affected by the political excitement of the time. Thus, during the famous pilgrimage in 1921 of the primitive and ignorant plantation "coolies" of Assam and Bengal, some hundreds of them were suddenly and brutally cleared out of the Chandpur station yard at midnight by armed soldiers. They made no resistance, but shouted "*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai.*" The revolutionary consciousness was of course generally extremely dim, but there can be no doubt that it was present. Strike took place in every part of the country in all kinds of occupations. There was in most cases no organisation before the strike, but some kind of union was often established afterwards. All grades of workers took part. Frequently the demands of the strikers were not formulated until they had been out for some days, and they were then of an "extravagant" nature. The chief concrete demand was nearly always for wage increases, with reduction of hours a close second, but there were others often not of an economic character. The unions then formed were what would be expected from the circumstances of their origin. They were industrial in type, but usually covered only a restricted area. They often had no regular membership payments, &c., and have been, in fact, accurately described as "little more than strike committees."

There are now few remnants of those days. The present movement operates in conditions of economic stability and political quiescence. Only in Bombay in the last two or three years has the depression in the cotton industry brought about a general tendency towards worsening of conditions. But the pressure has only sufficed to give a spurt to organisations of the present type.

The present movement, as has been remarked, while not strictly a craft unionism,<sup>1</sup> is similar in several respects to a typical craft movement, such as that in Britain in the

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<sup>1</sup> Practically the only pure craft unions, apart from the Mechanical Engineers' Association of Akola, which could almost be called a professional



middle of the last century. It is mainly a movement of the upper grades of workers for extremely limited aims. The organisation is fairly thorough, but narrow as regards activities, the classes of workers involved, and the areas from which they are drawn. There is little inter-union organisation or solidarity, little class-consciousness, and a general avoidance of political activity.

It is proposed here to describe the trade union movement as the writer has hitherto seen it, in a little greater detail, in the hope that it will be of interest to Western readers, and will give some idea of present conditions and possibilities of development. The writer's observations are limited to the Bombay Presidency and the Punjab, but conversations and published reports enable it to be said that statements applicable to those Provinces are fairly sound in regard to the rest of India, apart, perhaps, from Madras.

There are several unions which aim at covering the whole of India. They are mainly of long standing, contain only uppergrade workers, and remain practically aloof from the general movement.<sup>2</sup> The All-India Postal and R.M.S. Association and the All-India Postal and Lower Grade Staff Union are loose federations of provincial and local unions. In some places one or other is split, so that in these towns there are three Postal unions with perhaps not more than one or two hundred members each. Poona and Baroda are examples. The Association was founded in 1906, and is well established, with nearly 40,000 members and a fund of perhaps a lakh of rupees. The Union arose from local unions founded in 1918 and later. Both are recognised by the Government.

The All-India Telegraph Association was founded in 1908, and has about 3,000 members and substantial funds. A split

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association, are those constituting the Ahmedabad Textile Workers' Union. It is significant of the atmosphere in which this union, and indeed the movement generally, works, that craft unionism having been introduced, some workers demand more of it than their officials are willing to give them.

<sup>2</sup> Only the Bombay section of the Postmen's Union has been affiliated to the T.U.C., and has recently withdrawn because of the protest

occurred in 1923, when the All-India Telegraph Union was formed. The Association contains all the Anglo-Indian and European members, while the Union has only Indians. The lower grade employees have several separate local unions.

There are other All-India federations such as that of the Currency Office Associations.

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of India and Burma has 2,250 members, almost all Anglo-Indians and Europeans (drivers, guards, &c.). It was founded in 1898, and is thus the oldest union in India. It is strictly non-political and tends to separate its members from other railway employees. It tried, successfully, to keep its members at work during the N.W. Railway strike of 1925. There should also be mentioned the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, founded in 1925, after similar attempts had been made in 1921. It includes most of the railway unions, but its existence is only nominal. During the N.W.R. strike of 1925 it sent its secretary to the scene of action, but, according to Mr. Miller's report, he confined himself to mediation, and when that failed, to delivering defeatist speeches. During the B.N.R. strike of this year the federation was entirely inactive.

The G.I.P. railway has at present four separate unions, all situated at Bombay. One is for the Bombay shops, two for the headquarters clerical staff, and one for the suburban station-masters, clerks, &c. The total membership is 5,000 to 6,000. The railway employs in all over 100,000 men. It is perhaps not an accident that the shop union, while perhaps less successful than the others in remedying grievances, &c., is the only one affiliated to the T.U.C. or the Central Labour Board, and has recently established a branch at Kalyan. The B.B.C.I. Railway has three separate unions, one with about 2,000 shopmen at Bombay,

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made by the Delhi T.U.C. against the dispatch of Indian troops to China. About the same time the Department of Posts and Telegraphs announced that unions of its employees must not affiliate to the T. U. C., as the latter is a political body.

one with 6,000 members of all grades at Ahmedabad, and one at Ajmer. Even the N.W.R. has had separate unions at Karachi and Sukkur, but these are dying out. A separate union of railway clerks has recently been formed at Lahore, but it adopted Mr. Miller as its president, and is the result rather of discontent with the old union than of sectarian aims. Other militants, headed by Miller, have also recently broken away from this union and begun to organise a new one.

The N.W.R. union, at one time probably the most powerful union in Asia, really requires separate treatment. It began to organise in 1920, and in the same year fought a long and successful strike. The membership soon afterwards reached 85,000, out of about 125,000 then employed, and included all grades, among them a substantial proportion of the Europeans. It has fallen since then, with a temporary revival in 1925, owing partly to the general stabilisation of conditions, but also because of the special measures taken against it on account of the strategic importance of the line. Mr. Miller was imprisoned, other leading members were suborned, "tame" rival unions started, and so on. The paying membership of the existing recognised union is about 2,000.

Unions are now in most cases confined practically if not formally to upper or skilled grades of workers. Thus, the Bombay Port Trust has three unions (with a purely theoretical joint committee), one for the 600 men on the Port Trust Railway, one for the 1,000 workshopmen, & c., and one for the 1,600 tally clerks, shed superintendents, &c. And this last is the most successful and is the only one "recognised." But the 2,000 or more dock labourers are entirely unorganised. Even in these unions the upper grades are more strongly represented than the lower. The same thing applies in a less degree to the railway shop unions, and to others.

Thus, the Bombay Port Trust Docks Staff Union shows the following composition (May, 1927) :

<i>Grade</i>	<i>No. Employed</i>	<i>No. in Union</i>	<i>Wage rates (Rs.per mth.)</i>
Minor officials ..	120	105	125, 175, 225 (3 grades)
Senior clerks ..	200	175	85-110
Junior clerks ..	350	300	50-85
Menial staff ..	900	550-600	18-30

Similarly with the G.I.P. Railway Workmen's Union, which has the following membership (roughly) in the Matunga shops :

<i>Grade</i>	<i>No. Employed</i>	<i>No. in Union</i>	<i>Wage rates (Rs.per mth.)</i>
Foremen ...	25	—	260—
Chargemen ...	250	10	140-190, 200-260
Mistries ...	100	25	86-140
Workmen ...	4,000	1,500	50-86
Smiths ...	700	500	50-86
Assistants ...	2,000	500	30-40
Apprentices ...	100	50	16-32
Coolies ...	1,000	100	23-29

This is partly the result of the natural tendency of the unions to fall into the hands of the more literate members, who in present circumstances do not urgently require the strength to be derived from the solidarity of the lower grades. It is one aspect also of the general difficulty of organising the more illiterate workers, which is exemplified by the failure yet to establish a really successful union in the Bombay textile industry. There are here two unions, the Bombay Textile Labour Union, founded January 1, 1926, which has about 7,500 members, and the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal (Mill Workers' Association), founded 1923, with about 3,000. The total number employed is about 150,000. Even the Ahmedabad Textile Workers' Union, with all its resources and traditions, is finding it difficult to keep its members. Though 20,000 strong in 1922, and successful in regaining nearly 15,000 members in two years after the strike of 1923, it is now losing members, and has about 11,000 (out of over 50,000). Similarly the textile unions at Broach and Sholapur have disappeared, though on the other

hand one has been recently established at Indore. The migratory character of mill labour, of which much has been said, is decreasing, and is no longer of much importance, at any rate at Bombay.

Many other classes of workers of similar skill and education remain practically or wholly unorganised—in Bombay, building, oil, gas, tramway, and other workers, and generally miners, jute workers, &c. Even when organised, either in their own or in predominantly upper grade unions, workers of this kind tend to form a “floating population” in the union. All textile unions say the same thing. The Bombay Textile Labour Union had in January, 1926, 6,000 members. It increased to over 9,000 by the end of the year, but again fell to just under 7,500 in June, 1927. The Girni Kamgar Mahamandal speaks of a “steady stream of members through the union”

The aims of the present movement are very limited. Though petitions and memoranda are continually being presented on general grievances, such as wages and hours, they are almost always unsuccessful, and there are not the spirit or material resources necessary to conduct a struggle for improvements. Strikes occur fairly frequently, mainly on account of attempts to worsen conditions, or victimisation, which is very common. Employers and managers are almost always arbitrary and provocative in their attitude, except when dealing with superior grades.

The efforts of unions are, therefore, directed mainly towards the remedying of individual complaints, and in this the upper grades are markedly more successful than the lower. The usual complaints are excessive fines, arbitrary dismissals, irregularities in promotions due to bribery and favouritism, &c.

There is a general sentiment in favour of benefit funds. The older unions, especially the A.S.R.S., have them in plenty, but the new unions and the customary contributions. (1 to 8 annas per month) are too small to make them generally successful. Many unions already have Death Benefit schemes,

and voluntary benefits with special subscriptions are becoming more common.

A few unions conduct educational classes for their members, the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal, the Bombay Postal and Lower Grade Staff Union, and the Ahmedabad Union in particular (The last-named runs also temperance work, a research department, a hospital, &c.). But the education provided is in all cases the "Three R's" (*plus* religious instruction at Ahmedabad). Mr. Joshi has attempted an inter-union class in the history and principles of Trade Unionism, but without great success.

The organisation of unions is commonly good for the very limited purposes. The proportion of actual to possible members is often high, at any rate for upper grade workers. A committee is appointed in the early stages, usually representative of all grades, and is re-elected at annual meetings. (It is not unusual, after the first month or two, for the annual meetings to be the only occasions on which the mass of members meet or take any part, save payment.) The active officers, owing to the danger of victimisation, are often "outsiders." The union has an office, usually a small room with a typewriter. These are sometimes shared with another union, especially in Bombay, where unions are numerous and rooms expensive. The older and bigger unions have permanent officials, and many of the newer unions in Bombay employ for part of their time the paid servants of the Social Service league or the Central Labour Board. The committees in most cases meet regularly and conduct the small amount of routine business. Rules and reports are published, in many cases in vernacular and English editions. The older unions publish journals, which rival their European counterparts in dullness, and some of the newer ones publish occasional bulletins. Contributions are usually collected at the place of work by committee members, and receipts are passed. A few unions adopt the system of membership cards. The books are in most cases well kept. In short, "Strict Business" might be the motto of Indian Trade Unionism.

A warning should at once be uttered against accepting this as a picture of the movement as a whole. It is correct of those unions of the upper grade type, which are active, as nearly all the Bombay unions are at the moment. But in a few cases there, and in many elsewhere, when demands are temporarily satisfied, or further advance is found to be impossible, or a severe defeat has been suffered, stagnation sets in. The union may simply cease to work, or if individuals try to keep it going, members drop away. There is little or nothing, material or moral, to keep them together.

It is typical of social conditions generally that women's organisation hardly exists. Women are employed in large numbers, but as lower grade workers. The Girni Kanigar Mahamandal has about twenty women members, and there are a few organised in Ahmedabad and Bengal (jute workers).

Inter-union organisation is not of importance. The All-India T.U.C. contains a majority of the organised workers, though not of the unions. It and its subsidiary bodies, the Provincial Federations (in Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and in a nebulous form in the Central Provinces and the Punjab) exist mainly because they are the representatives of the labour movement officially recognised by the Central and (sometimes) by the Provincial Governments. Owing to the great distances and the general poverty of the movement, meetings can seldom be held between Congresses, and the work done is mainly of a routine character. The members of the unions take little interest in its doings, and if they send delegates they do not usually receive reports.

There is only one body in the country which can in any way be compared to a Trades Council, the Central Labour Board of Bombay.\* And that is solely because of its

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\* The Provincial Federations of course tend to become in practice confined to Madras City, Calcutta, &c. And there is in Rangoon a general labour union with 10,000 members from different industries. It appears to be an unusually successful lower grade organisation, and is probably in practice nearer to genuine Trades Council than any other.

constitution. It does not work as a Trades council. It, or rather Mr. Jhabvala, organises separate unions, and sometimes conducts temperance propaganda. The former he does as provincial organiser for the T.U.C., the latter as secretary of the Central Labbur Board.

There is commonly great solidarity among members of the same union, especially of the same grade, and strikes often result from this, But general class-consciousness is seldom to be noticed, except among lower grade workers. It may be mentioned that the writer was present at a meeting of railway workers at the time of the agitation against the dispatch of Indian troops to China, and although the men in question have grounds for grievance against the Chinese, who are employed in the railway on the same work for higher pay, they brought forward a young Chinese worker and cheered him loudly as a demonstration of class solidarity.

The first May-day demonstration was held in Bombay this year, and was attended mainly by municipal-, mill-, and railway-men, *i.e.*, by lower and middle grade workers. (It is possible that the upper grade men were kept away by their characteristic petit bourgeois "respectability complexes.") It should be said that men of the lower grades, though generally unorganised, have some knowledge of what the Labour Movement means. Every worker in Bombay appears to know and respect Jhabvala, just as all Punjab workers know Miller.

A word should be said on the difficulties in labour organisation arising from differences of language, religion, &c. They are no doubt obstructions, but are not as important as is commonly thought in Europe, even in the Punjab, where communal feeling is at its worst.\* The chief difficulty of this

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\* Efforts are occasionally made by employers to arouse communal passions, *e.g.*, recently in the Bombay Port Trust Docks Staff Union, and previously in the N. W. R. union. Neither had any success. In fact only three cases have come to the writer's notice. The Moslems have recently withdrawn almost *en bloc* from the Ahmedabad Weavers' Union. The Punjab Press Workers' Union is said to have collapsed last year from this cause, but it was in any case a feeble body. The Indian Seamen's Union, Bombay, has split nominally on this ground. Many of the saloon crews (Indian Christians, mainly Goanese) have withdrawn to form a new union, as the



nature is due to the relatively large differences in the wage rates of various grades (see tables on page 1056). It comes about through the greater effectiveness of upper grade workers in pressing their claims, through the scarcity of persons with elementary or technical education, and partly, no doubt, through a deliberate dividing policy.

The influence of "outsiders" as officials and leaders is a delicate question, and one of great importance. They are certainly necessary, especially for lower grade unions, because of general illiteracy and the risk of victimisation. Only one such union, the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal, is carried on nominally without outside helpers. They tend to be eliminated for practical purposes by upper grade unions, when the need for them disappears. But it is the writer's impression that the present "outsiders" as a whole deserve their bad name. Many enter the movement with interested motives, and though they may promote efficiency they are not to be relied upon. A notorious case is that of the B.N. Railway strike of this year. Even if, as is often the case, their motives are purely unselfish, they generally strengthen the sectarian and otherwise reactionary tendencies to which the movement is so prone. The Ahmedabad Union is perhaps the worst case. Here the President is an ordinary humanitarian, a member of a mill-owning family, and a conscious advocate of class-collaboration. Other officials, though they see something of its dangers, allow themselves to be completely led by Gandhi, whose policy is (in most respects, but not all) the same.

Bombay is blessed with disinterested and not unprogressive leaders. The Punjab is not so fortunate. The policy of the officially recognised body is one of sheer servility. Bengal

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old one also contains engine and deck hands (non Christians, mainly Mohammedans) Communal feeling is present, but the split was promoted by the shipowners and brokers, because the old union was opening its doors to the other crews, and was trying to extend its activities beyond the traditional limits of a mere employment bureau. The differences which often separate Indians from Anglo Indians and Europeans are economic. The latter are invariably privileged, and often paid much higher rates.

has officials of both kinds, and has for years been divided by quarrels, which have more than once split unions, probably of purely personal origin. Many of the unions seem to be of the type described by Mr. Tom Johnston in his report on the jute industry. Three out of the four unions in that industry were bogus, and served merely to advertise their presidents. Madras has leaders who do not commit the usual error of abstaining from political activity, but their politics is not that of the working class. A Labour Party has been established which runs candidates in local elections. These make the grave mistake (in present circumstances) of opposing Congress candidates. The Party in fact seems to be entirely for electoral purposes, which are of very minor importance for labour at the present stage, and to have been organised in support of the reactionary remnants of the Home Rule League.

The acknowledged national leader of the trade union movement is Mr. N. M. Joshi, the General Secretary of Trade Union Congress. With all respect it must be said that he is as much out of place in his position as, let us say, Mr. Sidney Webb would be as Secretary of the Miners' Federation. He carries on his work with the same disinterested care that Mr. Webb would no doubt devote to the position suggested, and undoubtedly does the best that is possible along his lines. But his function is observation, research and the drafting of Bills, not leadership.

Enough has now been said to give some idea of the movement as it stands. It is clear that the most important circumstances determining the present phase are the economic stability and the political deadness—the slow collapse of bourgeois nationalism, and the continued paralysis of the petty-bourgeoisie.

India can expect on general grounds a prosperous industrial future. But Indian industry and economics generally are still very closely dependent upon Britain, which is becoming more and more a broken reed in these matters. And it is almost certain that the immediate political future of the British Empire, and Asia generally, is a stormy one.

It seems in any case safe to prophesy that the decades of peaceful progress, which many Indian leaders, apparently on the example of Britain, appear to expect, will not materialise. But it is even safer to predict that the present political quiescence in the country will not last for more than a year or two. The petty-bourgeoisie in the national movement are beginning to revolt against the bourgeois leadership, the last remnants of which are fast going over to the Imperialist camp, in preparation for the Statutory Commission. It is to be expected in view of the generally difficult position of British capitalism, that they will not be disappointed. Substantial concessions, probably "Dominion Status," &c., will be offered, and obviously the whole of the bourgeois political school will accept them thankfully. All pretence of Swarajist opposition will probably disappear fairly quickly. The mantle of nationalism will fall upon the shoulders of the petty-bourgeoisie, who will be forced to seek the assistance of the Labour Movement. (The example of Ireland must not be taken too seriously, as there the civil war upset the "normal" course of events.) The emergence of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, of which four,\* counting the Young India Society, of the Punjab, now in existence, shows this tendency. They have already made some impression upon the Labour Movement. Owing partly to their influence the T.U.C. at its last session carried a resolution in favour of industrial unionism. Unfortunately, a last-minute amendment by a railway representative was accepted, substituting "federations of unions" for "unions." Thus the resolution, which might have had some little effect, was rendered absolutely useless, by the action of

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\* In Bengal, Bombay, Rajputana (Ajmer) and the Punjab. The Punjab Society was the first to organise a May-day demonstration in India, in Lahore in 1926. The Bombay Party has established itself as leader of the opposition in the Bombay provincial Congress Committee. It organised the May-day demonstration this year, and is leading the present (end of August) strike of protest against the attempt to make the weavers in some mills work three looms instead of two.

the industry which stood most to gain, at the moment, from its application.

In Bombay in particular, the Workers' and Peasants' Party is carrying on propaganda for greater activity in the unions (some unions have now commenced monthly general meetings) and for the transformation of the Central Labour Board into a genuine Trades Council, &c. It is clear from what has been said above that they will have largely to depend upon what has here been called "lower grade" labour, and the solution of the still unsolved problem of the organisation of the great mass of Indian Labour probably lies with them.

There is a general realisation in political circles of the future importance of the Labour Movement, and though nothing is done, Congress leaders speak more frequently than ever of Labour work. At the Delhi Congress, two leaders, Mr. Chaman Lal and Lala Lajpat Rai, who had been out of touch with labour for some years, reappeared. The former rejoined the movement because, after three years of Swarajist politics, he realises that bourgeois nationalism is dead, and that the future conduct of the struggle will depend upon Labour. The latter came for exactly the contrary reason, that he saw the future danger, for the bourgeoisie, and wished to check it in time.\* The struggle between Nationalism and Imperialism for the possession of the Labour Movement has begun. When it has fully opened out, the next great stage in the history of Indian labour will have commenced.

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\* Cf. his remarks in the *People* (Lahore, March 20, 1927) on the Delhi session of the Trades Union Congress : "It (the Labour Movement) is a tender plant which requires careful nursing—careful watering and protection from the rigours of the climate... What the Indian worker wants is not dogma, but help in organising, and in the redress of his grievances against the Government and the employers. To feed him on doctrines ...is to lead him astray."

## **J. CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE\***

### **Introduction**

The basis of British imperialist exploitation of India is to be found in the exploitation of the agricultural population. India has been primarily valuable to British capitalism as a source of raw material and as a market for British manufactured goods, and the development of India in these two directions has involved the transformation of the old social order, the destruction of the old self-contained village economy and skilled handicrafts, and the conversion of agriculture into a capitalist industry. The effect of British policy is seen in the overpressure on agriculture, resulting in no less than 72 per cent. of the total population of 320 millions being now dependent on this one form of occupation, and in the extreme and growing poverty of millions of cultivators. This poverty is only partially attributable to the direct burden of Government land revenue exactions. More important, as will be seen, are the less obvious forms of exploitation due to the penetration of capitalism in the village and the conversion of the cultivating peasant into a producer of commodities for the capitalist market. In this process, exploitation by the Government, by landlords, by money-lenders and capitalist merchants all play their part and no remedy for the poverty-stricken conditions of the peasant can be found by considering any of these evils apart and alone, any more than remedies can be found by isolated reforms in the direction of improving agricultural methods, devising checks on sub-division of holdings, & c. The change that is taking place in the village is a whole process of social change, involved in the replacement of feudalism by capitalism and the development of capitalism with its accompanying class differentiations marked above all by the creation of a class of landless agricultural proletarians.

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\* Written by Clemens Dutt, Published in : *'The Labour Monthly'* in December 1927, London.

### **Exploitation by Government**

A direct levy on the peasant cultivator or landlord based on the area cultivated or the amount of the crop was the earliest form of government revenue, and for a long time was the chief source of income for the British administration. Sir William Hunter, in his book on *The Indian Empire* (1882), declared that :

“The land furnishes the chief source of Indian revenue and the collection of the land tax forms the main work of Indian administration.”

At that time the gross revenue collected amounted to £22 millions. In 1924-25 the total land revenue from British India had increased to Rs. 37.7 crores or the equivalent of about £22 millions. With the development of other sources of revenue, especially from customs duties and from railways, the land revenue, although greater than before, ceased to represent the most important item of the budget receipts. The report of the taxation inquiry committee issued in 1926 declares that the land revenue which forty years ago contributed 53 per cent. of the total receipts of the Government, now contributed only 20 per cent. Nevertheless, this burden, which falls with especial hardship on the millions of small cultivators, is sufficiently great, added to as it is by local exactions and the payment of indirect taxes on salt, &c., to cause many Indian nationalists to see in it the main reason for the now universal poverty of the peasants. The opinion of Keir Hardie, written after his tour in 1907, may be taken as typical and is worth quoting at length. He says :

“Eighty per cent. of the taxes in India are raised by revenue assessment upon land. The Government steadily discourages private ownership in land as it objects to an idle landlord class coming between itself and the real producers of wealth—those who till the soil. The amount of taxes raised direct from the peasant is from 50 to 65 per cent. of the value of the yield of the land, in addition to which they have to pay local taxes and various other small items so that probably not less than 75 per cent. of the harvest

goes in taxes... From time to time the revenue charges are revised so that the Government may obtain the last penny which can be wrung from the over-weighted peasant. Increases of 30 per cent. are common, and there are many on record of 50, 70 and even 100 per cent. It is this fact which keeps the people of India in a condition of perpetual, hopeless, grinding poverty."

Keir Hardie quotes also some figures which he regards as fairly conclusive evidence that the peasant pays more now than he did under pre-British rule. Thus, he points out that when the province of Bengal came under British dominion in 1817, the revenue claimed by its rulers from the peasants was estimated at 8 million rupees or one-fourth of the crop. After 1817 the process of forcing up the land revenue began, so that by 1823 it had been increased to 15 million rupees, and by 1875 to 48 million rupees. According to the latest official report (Agricultural Statistics, 1924-25) the total land revenue from the fully assessed area of the Bombay Presidency for which figures are available, and excluding Indian states, was 43.8 million rupees. This, however, excludes about 48 million acres not fully assessed, and another million acres of which figures were not available. The estimated revenue for 1925-26 given in the provincial budget amounts to 56 million rupees. There has been considerable controversy over the question whether or not land taxation is heavier in its incidence now than it was under pre-British rule, but one thing is certain, and that is that the peasant is made to yield as big a tribute as can possibly be exacted without causing his absolute ruin, and that he receives very little in return. The peasant might just as well be paying the money directly to the British Treasury in England for all the return that he sees. There are many villages which pay a contribution of several thousand rupees and never see a British official or and sign of Government enterprise, not even a school. The provision of village education should obviously be the first charge on the money taken from the peasants, yet its neglect in India is a by-word throughout the world, and two villages out of every three will

be found to have no school at all. Nor can Government irrigation schemes be regarded as a return for land revenue payments, for irrigation water is made the subject of a special charge, and, in fact, the Government irrigation works taken as a whole yield a return of 7 to 8 per cent. on the capital invested in them.

Apart from its magnitude as a whole, the British system of obtaining revenue from the peasantry exhibits several features which involve special hardships for the poorest part of the population. In the first place, the revenue demand is based on the area and rental value or quality of the soil and is independent of the size of the crop, on which all pre-British land taxation was based. Only in the case of very severe crop failure can there be a compassionate remission of land taxation. Consequently when the crop is indifferent or poor the peasant usually suffers severely. In the second place, together with abolition of estimation of the tax according to the crop, payment in grain has also been abolished and replaced by payment in money. Thirdly, payment is enforced with the utmost severity. There have been many cases where peasants have had to sell their cattle and household utensils to pay the tax, and even more frequently cases where they have had no alternative but to fall into the clutches of the moneylender to avoid distraint. Even more harsh is the nature of the incidence of the tax, which is levied uniformly whether the cultivator has a holding of several hundred acres or a miserable plot of less than an acre. In the case of a big landlord or cultivator, the payment of land revenue is a comparatively small burden ; in the case of the poor peasant it is an exaction which represents a relatively enormous toll on the amount available for the purchase of the necessities of life.

More than half of the total cultivated area in India is held under the ryotwari system of tenure, where the ryot or cultivator pays the land revenue direct to the government officers under an assessment which is revised at periods of about thirty years. Frequent cases of discontent occur among the peasantry at the enhancement of land revenue on revision



of the settlement. Thus, in the Alibagh district there has been this year a considerable movement of revolt among the peasants, who have refused to pay land tax owing to the increases imposed. In such cases, the Government has the power to sell the goods of the ryot and even to alienate his holding. In the report published in March, 1927, of the Committee on Land Revenue appointed by the Bombay Legislative Council, there is a minute of dissent by Rao Saheb D. P. Desai which, among other things, calls attention to the "stringent provisions of the Bombay Land Revenue Code which enable the collector to sell the immoveable property of an agriculturist under sections 153-55 for arrears of land revenue," and he declares :

"The present land revenue law of procedure is arbitrary and harsh and even the small concessions that it makes are never carried out in practice... ownership once enjoyed by the ryot over his holding has been snatched away from him and he is made a serf of the Government."

Provincial reports on land revenue show that sale of peasant holdings in default of revenue payments still take place. In 1922-23 the Madras Government sold land estimated to be worth over 11 lakhs of rupees in order to recover arrears of revenue amounting to less than 2¼ lakhs. The sale realised less than 2 lakhs.

The facts relating to land revenue show that it plays an important part in the exploitation of the peasant population. The cultivators holding their tenancies direct from the Government under the ryotwari system are not in the position of peasant proprietors, but are virtually tenants of an exacting and oppressive landlord. The final stage of capitalist agriculture is reached when the land is cultivated by wage-labourers hired by the capitalist landlord. Under the present system in India that stage has not yet been reached, but since so large a proportion of the small peasants are hardly able, or definitely unable, to make a bare subsistence out of the land, they may be considered to all intents and purposes as wage labourers on an enormous State farm who receive for

their labour only just sufficient for their reproduction, while the rest of the value that they create goes into the pockets of the exploiters.

### **Exploitation by Landlords**

The introduction of capitalism into Indian agriculture involved a number of processes including as the most important (1) the break-up of the village communal system of production, (2) the introduction of private property in land, (3) the replacement of barter by money economy, (4) the abolition of serfdom and other relics of feudalism. The first two processes naturally go together, and from the earliest occupation of India, the officials of British administration consciously sought to reproduce the social relations of capitalist agriculture with which they were familiar at home. Their desire was to create a body analogous to the landlord class in England and they considered the best way to secure this object was to confer large property rights in land on loyal ruling chieftains or on their own creatures (often originally mere farmers of the revenue), and to fix the land tax payable by them in perpetuity. This was the origin of the permanent settlement made in 1793, under which the amount payable as land revenue by the big landlords or zemindars was fixed once for all. Later, the Government found that it was undersirable to be unable to change the rates of assessment, and so the later assessments under the zemindary system, in which the Government collects the revenue not directly from the peasant but through the class of superior landlords, were made temporary. The area under the zemindary system in British India amounted in 1921 to about 318 million acres (*i.e.*, about 48 per cent. of the total area), of which 123 million acres are under permanent settlement.

The big zemindars are still the typical representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie. Of the 229 millions dependent on agriculture as estimated by the 1921 census, including Indian States, 10 millions are put down as obtaining income

from rents.\* The majority of the zemindars are a sheer burden on agriculture, mere rent-receivers, rack renting and exploiting the peasants under them. The total burden of this parasitic class in agricultural production on the backs of the actual cultivators is considerably greater than that of the Government land revenue exactions. Professor K.T. Shah attempts by two different methods to arrive at an estimate of the total income of the landlord class. The first estimate is derived from the figure of the total land revenue paid on land held under the zamindari system. This land revenue amounts to about 18 crores of rupees and on the assumption that the zemindars pay away about ten per cent of their income as land tax, their total income would be approximately 189 crores of rupees, or about £135 millions. Reckoning that there are rather over 10 millions supported by rent in British India, or nearly two million families, this estimate would give an average annual income of 180 rupees per head or 900-1,000 rupees per family. This sum is at least several times as large as the average annual income of a peasant cultivating family, and, of course, while many families of rent-receivers will be also cultivators, there will be a large number of big proprietors with incomes much above 1,000 rupees per year.

The second method of estimating the burden of landlordism is of especial interest, as being based on the toll taken of the agricultural production of the peasants. Professor Shah calculates the total net agricultural production for 1921-22 to be valued at just over 2,000 crores of rupees.\*\* Of This, the share of British India on an area basis is about 1,300 crores, or allowing for richer land and greater cultivation, say 1,500 crores. Nearly half of this is produced under the

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\* Professor K.T. Shah estimates the total number of rent receivers in the several provinces of British India as 12  $\frac{1}{4}$  million as compared with 193 million ordinary cultivators, (*Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India.*)

\*\* One crore = 10,000,000. A crore of rupees = approximately £7½ millions.

zemindary system, *i.e.*, an annual value of 600-750 crores of rupees. If, then, rent is taken as equal to a quarter of the gross produce, the total income from agricultural rents will be 150-188 crores of rupees.

It is possible that the above estimates are rather on the high side for some parts of the country, but this is certainly not the case for the permanently settled area, particularly in Bengal. In Bengal, the land revenue under the permanent settlement remains what it was a century ago, *viz.*, about 2¼ crores of rupees, but the rental value of the land has so much increased that, according to the All-India census report, "the total realised as rent by the landlord class including middle men in Bengal is Rs. 13.5 crores per annum." In some parts of Bengal there are as many as 12 or even 16 intermediate landlords between the revenue paying zemindar and the cultivating peasant, each one of whom does his best to rack-rent those below him, the final oppressive burden being borne by the poverty-stricken ryot.

Formerly, with more land available and fewer possible tenants, the landlords could not afford to dispossess their tenants and rents were lower. During the last century, with the growing pressure on land, rack-renting has enormously increased, so that the Government has been forced to introduce legislation in order to prevent the landlords from demanding exorbitant rents and ejecting the tenants from their holdings. As an example, the Revenue Administration Report for the Province of Agra, 1892-93, notes that in one year at that time "application for ejectment of tenants-at-will rose from 57,875 to 64,353." Two years later the figure rose to 72,105. The Agra Tenancy Act, 1901, attempted to counteract this by defining different classes of tenants, with the object of making it illegal to eject or raise the rent of the established holders. In spite of legislation, the number of non-cultivating landlords and tenants is everywhere on the increase. Madras statistics show that the proportion of non-cultivators supported by agriculture increased

from 20 per 1,000 in 1901 to 27 per 1,000 in 1921 (Pillai, *Economic Conditions in India*, 1925). In the Guntur region of Madras, the proportion of non-cultivating landowners increased from 30 per 1,000 in 1901 to 34 in 1911 and 56 in 1921. The number of non-cultivating tenants increased from 2 per 1,000 in 1901 to 32 per 1,000 in 1921. (*Economic Organisation of Indian Villages*, Ranga and Reddi, 1926.) Professor Radha Kamal Mukerji declares that "in the Punjab alone, the number of rent receivers has increased from 660,000 to 1,000,000 during the last decade." (*Forward*, January 17, 1926.) Even under the ryotwari system the number of non-cultivators is on the increase. In his study of the village of Jutegaon Bruk in the Bombay Presidency, Dr. Mann found that there were 146 landholders and only 114 separate cultivators. The following figures quoted by Pillai (*Economic Conditions in India*) give an idea of the growing rate at which land was changing hands in the Punjab at the end of the nineteenth century.

	Average Annual Sales of Land	Average Annual Area mortgaged
	(area in acres)	
1866-74	88,000	143,000
1875-80	93,000	212,000
1880-85	160,000	296,000
1885-90	310,000	590,000
1890-95	338,000	554,000

Mr. Pillai notes that "the new owners have not generally turned to the cultivation of the soil ; the old cultivators were to remain not as owners but as tenants."

These figures bear witness to the prevalent increasing poverty and distress of the peasant cultivators and the increasing expropriation from their holdings. The peasant proprietors are passing away, they are becoming mere workers for a parasitic landlord class, or are even definitely thrown into the ranks of the landless agricultural proletariat. The following quotation from a recent study of agricultural conditions in Malabar describes the same process of landlordism at work in another part of India.

“In a simple lease of the Verrumpattam type it is not at all uncommon that the tenant is called upon to pay to the landlord the whole of the estimated net produce after deducting the bare cost of seed and cultivation and consequently he is merely a labourer on subsistence wages, though it suits his landlord to bind him by contract. It frequently happens that the rent which the tenant covenants to pay is more than the land could yield, and in this case a burden of debt accumulates on him, and his position becomes little better than that of a slave. If he incurs his landlord's displeasure, a decree for eviction and arrears of rent, and his means of livelihood are gone for ever.” (*Economic Life in a Malabar Village*, S. Aiyer, 1925).

This sort of situation could be paralleled from almost every part of India. Connected with the development of capitalism in agriculture and the increase of the landlord class is another feature which is becoming more and more common all over India, viz., absentee landlordism. Formerly only the biggest landlords left their estates to be managed by an agent and themselves lived in the towns or abroad. The majority of the lesser zemindars were themselves interested in agriculture and were not yet attracted by the new methods of spending money available under capitalist civilisation. Since then more and more have left their holdings for the luxuries of a town life. Thus we have reproduced in India all the evils associated with “absentee landlordism,” familiar in the history of Ireland. Sir P. C. Ray, giving evidence before the Economic Inquiry Committee in 1925, declared, “one of the principal causes of the growing poverty of the rural population is absentee landlordism.” Naturally, with the hierarchy of landlords in Bengal under the permanent settlement, absentee landlords are more common there than elsewhere, but similar reports are available from all parts.

In Malabar, it is declared that “The big janmis or landlords are more often than not absentees living in a distant place interested only in the punctual collection of their dues.” (*Economic Life in a Malabar Village*, S. Aiyer, 1925).

A study of a village Bheka\* in the Allahabad district reports that "practically all the zemindars are absentees." and comments on its evil results in the lack of example and assistance to the cultivators, (such as could be afforded by the running of model farms) and the absence of communal activity. The author declares that whereas indifference to neighbourly obligations was formerly a characteristic only of the towns it is now finding its way to the village also.

The modern system of landlordism in India is predominantly on a capitalist money basis. Nevertheless many relics of feudalism still exist in many parts of India and especially in the Indian States. The depressed classes or outcasts, the so-called untouchables, were at one time in many cases serfs bound to the soil. Landlord oppression of these classes and of the poorer cultivators takes the form of the exaction of many other services and contributions besides that of rent. Such exactions consist especially of compulsory labour for the landowner and forced contributions and levies on special occasions paid either in money or in kind. Professor Mukerji (1925) says that many serfs still exist in most villages of the central provinces. In Malabar a peculiar feature of agricultural labour is the existence of a class of semi-slaves called Cherumas or Pulayas. It is only half a century ago that their legal status as slaves was removed and even now they are agricultural slaves attached to their master's soil and transferred to the buyer of land when it is sold. Their wages are paid in kind. In Cochin, they comprise 50 per cent. of the field labourers in the State. In Bombay Presidency there occurs a well-known form of tenancy known as the "Khoti" system, under which the owners of the soil, the "Khots," regard themselves as having various feudal rights over the peasants, who complain of

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\* *Studies in the Rural Economy of the Allahabad District*, B. G. Bhitnagar, 1924.

exaction of forced labour and other semi-feudal dues. These relics of feudalism are survivals from the pre-capitalist period. They are now rapidly passing away with the conversion of the former serfs into free proletarian labourers, but the exploitation of the latter is not any the less intense under their new status.



## **Attitude and Reactions of the British Government in India\***

### **Towards the Formation of Workers' & Peasants' Party in India and about its activities**

#### **Extract from a Private Letter from a Calcutta (British) Merchant**

Spratt the emisary from Moscow, continues to hold weekly (and his satellites almost daily) meetings at the Fort Gloster Mills, at which the chief dish served up to the workers is "Russia" and the advantage which would follow the expulsion of the 'Sahib' and his replacement by communistic rule. In the meantime the mills are as good as silent (as they have been since July 16th) and 12 to 15 thousand operatives are out of work (80% of whom are in a state of semi-starvation and would willingly work were it not for the picketting and intimidation).

Spratt's bag during the past twelve months has been the initiation and active furtherance of disorder (in every case resulting in bloodshed) amongst the B. N. Railway workers of Kharagpur, the E.I. Railway workers at Lilluah (resulting in the wrecking of a train), Tata's workers at Jamshedpur, the workers of a group of mills at Bauria—and many others. And in no single instance has a Provincial Government or the Government of India made by attempt to interfere with him. It is encouraging, therefore, to those of us who are entrusted with the management of large and hitherto prosperous and contended concerns, to pick up our morning and read the enclosed. We are all wondering what "the Government concerned" conceive to be "their responsibilities" to which they are so "fully alive"! The atmosphere out here just now

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\* Excerpts from "Communism in India", Unpublished Documents, 1925- 1934, pages 45 to 77, Edited by Subodh Roy.

*is highly charged and pregnant with trouble—a deep feeling of insecurity on our side, and arrogant insolence on the other.*

**SUBJECT :** *A review of the Book 'A CALL TO ACTION'—published by the WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTY OF BENGAL, 2/1 European Asylum Lane', Calcutta—1928.*

It contains the resolutions and report of the 3rd Annual Conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal which was held at Bhatpara in March 1928.

In this book a deliberate attempt has been made by the Executive of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal to show that complete national independence is not possible so long as the Indian capitalist class is associated with the Congress and is at the helm of "national struggle for freedom". In it, they also condemn the non-militant policy of the T.U. movement in India and says that the task of the Party is to transform the existing organisation so that it will give expression to real working class demands and to make the leadership such that it will give a courageous, militant and correct lead.

Then the Executive suggests ways and means as to how the "complete independence of India can be brought about by marshalling the organised forces of the masses of workers and peasants in the country.

I give below the extracts from this book to show what the aforesaid aims at :

P.2. In the Presidential address of the aforesaid conference, Atul Chandra Gupta, M.A., B.L. said "we have to wage an effective fight against both our exploiters and the foreign Government.... Our movement, while fighting for economic demands, must be a political one, and for the present our political work must be done to a large extent in connection with and within the Congress which we must aim to capture"...

P.3. The Soviet Republics not only add greatly to the strength of the movements for emancipation all over the world but prove the possibility of socialist reconstruction of society by the working class alone. They constitute a menace

to the stability of Imperialism and Capitalist exploitation, and the capitalist world especially Britain, prepares to attack and destroy this menace. Only the unstable state of international relationship in Europe and class situation in Britain have prevented the consummation before this time of the policy of attack on Russia. The danger of war against the Workers' Republic is increasing and demands the *attention of the masses*'...

P.4. The British Empire generally, and India particularly is experiencing "movement of revolt against the imperialist powers." The search for profits for British interests has intensified. More capital is invested in India, particularly since 1914.....

P.5. In the political sphere, the British Empire is in a very serious position. It is threatened with formal secession of the white Dependence... Its industrial and financial supremacy is least and its position is still declining. This critical situation leads the British bourgeoisie to seek support within the colonies, to secure its hold upon them, particularly in the event of war, which almost lead to the separation of India on the last occasion. This political necessity dictates the fundamental line of imperialist political policy within India—the extension of alliance with the Indian upper classes, to the bourgeoisie as a whole. This is the essence of the reformed Constitution.

The British bourgeoisie as a whole, derive wealth from India in four main ways: by selling British goods, by buying or producing cheap raw materials, by taxation, and by investment of capital in India in industries. Though the monopoly of India as a market is least, British goods still occupying the most important place.

P.6. The policy of imperialism in India to retain its position of dominance is three-fold one. (1) It secures firm control of the chief industries, administration etc. (2) Secondly, by encouraging internal conflicts of various kinds, it disintegrates the forces of opposition to it. (3) Finally it conducts a policy of direct suppression of movements dangerous to its rule.

P.7. The most important case of this policy of fomentation of differences is that of Hindu-Muslim divergence.

P.8. At the same time the policy of imperialism has been one of continued suppression of efforts to extend the basis of national movement to include the masses. The men retiring from Russia with radical or communist ideas have been practically all imprisoned and victimised. Others with similar ideas have been treated in the same way in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case. There is a continuous series of prosecutions for inciting the masses to hatred against the Government. Finally there is maintained a vigorous censorship of mails especially foreign, and wholesale prescription and seizure of literature with tendency.

P.9. It shows that the Indian bourgeoisie is in position of subordination to British capital and Zamindars etc. are allies of the Government.

P.12. The class differences within the Congress membership has been accentuated, the upper strata following the bourgeoisie and its Council policy the lower strata falling into indifference or a radical policy... The lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie and the remnant of the terrorist parties are the "Uniformed" of the Congress and constitute part of the ground, from which the Workers' and Peasants' Parties are now rising.

P.17. It is essential that working class organisations, the TUs, and T. U. C. fight and obtain freedom from the bourgeois control. These things require an independent workers' political party to educate, organise and lead the workers in their struggle.

P.17-18. Under the leadership of the industrial workers, the movement of the masses can go forward to abolish foreign exploitation, to establish democracy, and those elementary pre-requisites of life which 95% of the peasants of India still lack. By means of strike, demonstrations, hartals and the more laborious means of organisation and education, the class consciousness and solidarity of the masses will be raised to the level necessary before its tasks can be achieved.

P.18. Almost the most important problems which the masses will have to solve is the agrarian question, the relation of the cultivators to the soil on which they work—the central question of the ownership of land for the cultivator himself will have to be decided by the organised power of the peasants and landless labourers in conjunction with the general nationalists.

The Party has its tasks to gather together all sincere fighting elements from the ranks of the workers and peasants, and exploited middle class and the militant national movement and to force them into one united whole for conducting their united struggle. It will establish particularly close relations with the youth, the future leaders of the country and the T Us, the source from which mosts of its strength will be drawn.

P.22-23. The policy of the Party must be to carry forward the campaign for the boycott of the Simon Commission to the utmost extent inspite of the sabotage. Strikes and hartals must be encouraged, and the masses brought into the movement by associating their demands with the National slogans. The campaign must demands complete National Independence, and must work for calling a Constituent Assmebly elected by Universal Adult Suffrage which will concentrate and express authoritatively diverse demands and scattered struggles of the masses. The Constituent Assembly which can give the masses the united and militant lead which the All-Parties Conference has failed to give, will be the Nation's real answer to the British Government and the Simon Commission, and will constitute a definite step forward in the struggle of the masses for complete independence and the satisfaction of their pressing economic needs.

The slogan of the boycott of British goods may be supported as a means of rousing enthusiasm but only as a subsidiary to the slogan of a constituent Assembly.

The Party must also carry on propaganda in relation to international affairs. The League Against Imperialism be supported and its propaganda for the alliance of the revolutionary labour movement and colonial revolutionary

movements be assisted. Solidarity must be encouraged with the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, particularly in view of the danger of war. As a definite campaign must be conducted against war, especially amongst the peasants who supply the soldiers, and among the workers, who supply the materials and transport. The slogan must be advanced of non-cooperation with the Government and the war machine in the event of war.

P.25. The Party will try to rescue the peasants from the tyranny of the landlords and also exploitation of the money-lenders.

P.28. It is essential that the Workers' and Peasants' Party should attract to its banner the newly organising forces of the youth and give them its scientific social outlook and energetic radical policy. There must be established an independent youth organisation which undertake the following :

1. Participation in political nationalist movement
2. Advance the cause of Trade Unionism among the workers
3. Fight for the redress of the special grievances of the youth, especially unemployed
4. Political study and self-preparation
5. Conduct of education in political and economic subjects among workers, villagers and students
6. Act as a centre within the existing general youth organisations for the propaganda of radical ideas and the advancement of a sound policy

This youth organisation must have working class and peasant youths as its members.

P.32. Writing on Trade Unions it says that the workers be rallied around the following programme of immediate demands on a national scale :

1. Eight-hour day
2. Abolition of child labour
3. Minimum living wage
4. Abolition of system of fines

5. State support for unemployed etc.
6. Improvement of laws re: workmen's compensation and employers' liability
7. Installation of modern safety appliances in factories, mines etc.
8. Abolition of the system of Sardars.

P.34. The Party unequivocally stands for giving land to the present cultivators, eliminating all idlers living on the tributes from the peasants... He must be under obligation to none but the State, representing his own interests and himself.

P.35. The Conference protests against the action, taken by the Government forces and European staff which has now become a regular practice in strikes, of shooting upon strike (at Bamungachi) with the object of disheartening and defeating them.

It congratulates the workers of E.I. Railway, now locked out and those on strike in sympathy with them, both in the railways and in other works and promises them full support of the Party.

P.36. Muzaffar Ahmad, Dharani Goswami, A. Roy and Abdul Halim have been appointed to form a sub-committee in making arrangements to form the united party and to an all-India conference in December next.

It urges the formation of a Centre for conducting the propaganda of the League Against Imperialism in India and protests against the proscription of the publications of the League by the Government.

It deplores the action of the Executive Council of the AITUC in breaking off its relation with the Workers Welfare League in India, London.

P.36-37. It urges upon the TU movement the necessities of organising disciplined workers Defence Crops for conducting strikes, demonstrations etc., in effective manner.

P.37-49. These pages contain in plans of re-organisation and the constitution of the Party and its relation with other existing organisations in the country.

The Party has under it the following organisations :

1. Bengal Jute Workers' Association
2. Mymensingh Workers' and Peasants' Party with branch at Atia
3. Dhakeswari Mill Workers' Union
4. Bengal Glass Workers' Union
5. Scavengers' Union of Bengal with branches at Howrah, Dacca and Mymensingh
6. Workers' Protection League

On this page it traces the publication of GANAVANI as the organ of the Party. The Bengali weekly JAGARAN, (awakening) of Kustia supports the programme of the Party.

P.52. The General Secretary of the Party, S. N. Tagore is in Germany. He was sent to Europe to study the labour and political movements.

P.52-53. The following members of the Party were prosecuted by the Government :

1. S.A. Dange of Bombay
2. Shaukat Usmani of Bikaner
3. Md. Shafique of N.W.F.P.
4. Ramchandra Kapur of Lahore
5. P. Spratt of Labour Research Bureau, London
6. S.S. Mirajkar, Secretary of the Peasants' & Workers' Party, Bombay
7. Malik Fazli Elahi Qurban of Lahore
8. D. Combell of the C.P.G.B.
9. Md. Akbar Khan

P.53. It complains against the interception of letters etc. of the Party, especially in foreign Mails.

One Registered cover posted to them in Bombay on 11th February has not yet been delivered. A second registered and insured cover for Bombay was delivered late. The General Secretary sent M.O. from Germany in December last for £ 40. It has not been delivered. A similar sum sent to Bombay has also not been received. All periodicals sent from abroad are withheld. The authorities deny "our" assertion that C.I.D.



interferes. It also protests against the proscription of the pamphlet "India and China" by the Government.

P. 54-55. These contains the names of office bearers of the Party.

On the cover of this book there is an advertisement of a Hindi weekly organ of the Party named "LAL NISHAN" (Red Flag). It publishes ever Wednesday and is priced of two pice only.

Submitted.

Sd/- Girija Bhusan Roy,

S. I., S. B.

31.7.28.

Home/Political/1928

F 18/VII K.W. XI

Secret :

*Events and Developments in the Communist Situation in India from September 1928 to January 1929*

**BOMBAY :** The Labour situation in Bombay, which was more or less under the control of the Communist Party, headed by Bradley, Joglekar, Ghate, Nimbkar and others continued to deteriorate. The Communist Party captured nearly all the labour unions, and their representatives in the Strike Committee became virtual dictators. They attempted to frame an alternative scheme for standardized wages and in order to enable them to do so, the Mill-owners agreed to place the muster rolls at their disposal. Their scheme involved an increase of 30% over the standardized rates proposed by the Mill-owners' representatives on the Strike Committee. After this Jhavwala, Nimbkar, Bradley delivered lectures on 12th September 1928, and advised the men to refrain from going to work. Later on Jhavwala enquired from the Mill Owners' Association whether they would agree to a settlement on the following terms :

A committee of enquiry to be appointed by the Government to consider and report to the Mill-owners and the Strike Committees standardization scheme and the workers' 17 demands; immediate resumption of work on pre-strike wages; and, in case of these mills where earnings had fallen below the average of 1925 the owners adjust rates in such a manner as to restore 50% of the decrease in earnings to the workers. On receipt of this, the secretary of the Mill Owners' Association put forward his own scheme with Jhavwala without any result. On 26th September a committee of the Mill Owners' Association and the Negotiation Sub-committee of the Joint Strike Committee held meetings to consider the new scheme of standardization framed by the Strike Committee, and although agreement was reached on several points, the negotiations broke down on 29th September, again over the question of wages of workers. So, the strike in Vishnu the Luxmi, the Jam and the Narsingarji mills, Bombay continued. In the meantime the Communist group continued to incite mill-workers by speeches and writings to carry on the strike policy, and intimidation was employed to induce them not to join work. On this the management of certain mills applied to the Magistrate for an interim injunction, which was granted, restraining these persons from making objectionable speeches or inciting the mill-workers. The situation became so grave that Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co, agents of the Globe Mill, which was one of the mill involved in the General Strike, Bombay Textile Mills, decided to close down the Mill permanently. On 4th October, however, a settlement was arrived at, under the auspices of the Government, between the joint Strike Committee and the representatives of the Mill Owners' Association and the Strike was called off.

On 5th October, a huge mass meeting of the strikers, numbering more than 20,000 was addressed by Messrs. Nimbkar, Mirajkar, the communist leaders, who told their audiences that the compromise was a distinct defeat of the owners, in so far as cutting weavers' wages and introducing

the new rules were concerned, and the workers by means of the defensive strike had been able to maintain the status quo. The speakers declared that they did not expect any appreciable result from the proposed committee of Enquiry to be set up by the Government, and regarded the suspension of the strike merely as a truce. They impressed upon their audience that they would utilise the intervening time in building up a strong organization and in making preparation for a well-organised fight in the future. They persuaded the strikers to believe that with a view to securing better conditions of life and work in future, the workers should now prepare themselves for an offensive and not merely a defensive strike. This speech was with shouts of "VICTORY TO RED FLAG", "VICTORY TO GIRNI KAMGAR UNION", "LONG LIVE THE WORKERS' FIGHT", and "VICTORY TO THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTY". Red flags were enthusiastically displayed, and where they were not available, the workers even used their red turbans as flags. At the end of the meeting a huge procession of the strikers was formed and it went to the office of the Girni Kamgar Union, where it saluted the Red Flag amidst cheers from leaders.

The Bombay Government appointed a Committee consisting of Sir Charles Fawcett, Mr. M. P. Khareghat, I.C.S. (Retd.) and Mr. B. S. Kamat, lately a member of the Royal Agricultural Commission. The Committee sat, and asked both sides to lead evidence, but while they were sitting arose in different groups of mills, and twice the police were murderously assaulted. On one occasion revolvers had to be used, with the result that both the police and the strikers had several men killed on each side. The local communist agitators had been sowing the wind, and it appeared that they would reap whirlwind. On two occasions Messrs. Nimbkar and Dange were set upon by certain mill hands and were be laboured. The situation is still out of hand.

During the course of strike Jhavgwala received a sum of Rs. 1,095/- through "All Russian Genuyyenschafts Bank", Moscow from the "Central Kumitee Der Textilarbeiter".

Potter Milson, of the Workers' Welfare League of India, London, writing on August 9th 1928, B. F. Barucha, Bombay said: "Again the leaders of the "HERALD" of July 12 spills tears over the "plucky but unavailing struggle lasting over six months", but did not emphasize the need for material assistance, and its news columns mentioning the fact that the Textile International, the British Trade Union Congress and the International Federation of Trade Unions have sent over some money, but completely ignoring that fact that the Workers' Welfare League have been circulating the rank and file of the workers of this country, collecting small sums from the workers at their meetings and branches—more than that have been obtained—an international connection—impossible for the British T.U.C. as witness the fact that over 2,000 was sent through the League from the Pan Pacific Secretariat, and also a cheque had been received from the Federation *Federation Unitaire Des Industries Textile Vetelent Et Parties Similaires De France & Des Colonies*, for 2,000 francs, which will be sent you by the next mail. Also a collection is being made in Germany at the instigation of the League which we hope will realise something for the workers in the throes of struggle of Bombay".

It may be recalled that in May 1928 Mr. N. M. Joshi received from the same source Rs. 20,000/- from which Jhavwala received 1,095/- Saklatvala also sent 16/- to Barucha for the Bombay strike fund in September 1928. The "Worker" of August 31st, 1928 published the following: "The Fifth Annual Conference of the National Minority Movement sends fraternal greetings to the toiling workers and peasants of India. We express our pride in the magnificent struggle that the Indian workers in the Textile, Railways and other industries have made against the combined forces of native and British capitalism...we pledge ourselves to support you by every available means and express the hope that we shall be able to organise closer connections between the Indian Trade Union movement and the revolutionary workers organised under the banner of the National Minority Movement."

**BENGAL :** In Bengal, events in the Gloster Jute Mills; Bauria, assumed uglier proportions. Foiled in their attempt to compel the management to discharge the outside recruits, the agitators resorted to more violent methods of persuasion. On 23rd November, a private meeting convened by Bankim Mukherji and Radha Raman Mitra at Karbala Maidan, of which resolutions were passed to seize the Ferryghat Road and to introduce Saryagraha in the colie lines. Direct actions against the outsiders were also agreed upon. Methods of terrorising outside workers by assaults and by preventing food-stuffs from entering the mill bazar were quickly agreed brought into operation. S. C. Bose, Gopen Chakravarty, Radha Raman Mitra and Bankim Chandra Mukherji addressed a meeting of 4,000 people. While they were delivering speeches, a man informed the audience that the recruits were outraging the modesty of their families. A huge rush of some 3,000 strikers to the coolie lines ended in assaults upon recruits with lathis, kataris, and other offensive weapons and in a number of injuries. The police speedily restored order. The strike is still continuing, and one of the communist leaders Gopen Chakravarty, has taken up his abode in Bauria, while several others including Philip Spratt, are continuously visiting the area and encouraging the men to hold out. During an affray which occurred at this Mill in December, the Head Clark of the Mill was stabbed by one of the worker. Kalidas Bhattacharji has cabled for assistance to the strikers to Saklatvala in England and Soumendra Nath Tagore in Germany. (Tagore is actually in Moscow, but has a cover address in Berlin), Spratt has also wired to the Workers' Welfare League for funds.

In October, a new Bengali weekly entitled; "Lal Paltan" (Red Army) was published under the editorship of Bimal Ganguly, the Publicity Officer of the Lilloah E.I.R. Union, who took a prominent part in the last E.I.R. strike. This Weekly has on the front page a picture of a sickle and a hammer and a capitalist being blown from the mouth of a cannon by a labourer. It preaches the Communist gospel of equality and the abolition of the upper classes.

On 13th October 1928, about 3,000 workers of the Lilloah workshops, carrying about 100 red flags marched in a procession led by K. C. Mitra, the Secretary of the E.I.R. Union, to the Holiday Park in Calcutta, where a meeting was addressed by K. C. Mitra and others. The processionists while passing along Harrison Road and other streets, waved Red flag and shouted out "Lal Paltan ki Jai" (victory to the Red Army), "Mazdoor Bhaion ki Jay" (victory to the labourers).

**PUNJAB :** In September Sohan Singh Josh of Amritsar, leader of the Punjab Kirti Group was summoned by Spratt and Muzaffar Ahmad to attend an important meeting regarding the formation of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' League; but as Spratt and Muzaffar Ahmad had to go off suddenly to Bombay, Sohan Singh Josh missed them. During his stay Sohan Singh was reported to have held confabulations with Baba Gurdit Singh and Bengal Kirti Dal. He exhorted the other members of the Dal to co-operate with the Baba in thoroughly organising and strengthening the Kirti Dal. On November 5th Muzaffar Ahmad, writing to Sohan Singh Josh said : Please prepare a report of the Punjab Party at once giving full details of your activities. In this way we shall procure report from Bombay also and on the basis of these reports a general report for whole of India will be prepared. I draw your attention to the fact that Sikhs in Calcutta form a Bengal branch of the Punjab Party. This is really ludicrous. I held a Conference with some of them and what I understand is that the workers themselves are not unwilling to merge into the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal but there are some people who do not like the idea at all, especially the Bengal secretary is against it. Please do send a wire to anyone whom you know, I'll make the Bengal Kirti Dal at least a branch of the Bengal Party. Your wire must reach them before Sunday next. Also print a notice in the Punjabi addressing the Punjabi workers, Sikhs, Hindus and Mussalmans in Calcutta and nearabout. In this notice deal with the following points :

1. What Kirti Dal stands for?

2. Relation between the different parties in different

provinces—here you will say that all parties are working with the same principles and programme. In the coming conference all parties will be united and the Workers' and Peasants' party of India will be formed.

In October information was received that amalgamation of the Bengal Kirti Dal and the workers' and Peasants' Party became an established fact, and the Punjab members agreed to the inclusion within their organization of Bengali members.

### **Bengal Kirti group & Workers' and Peasants' Party**

On November 11th, a public meeting of Sikhs was held in Calcutta under the auspices of the Workers' & Peasants' Party with the object of popularising the Party Programme amongst the workers, and particularly the Sikhs, and securing their help in the forthcoming All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference. The proceedings were opened by Phillip Spratt who explained the programme of the Party and advised labour organisations to unite. Other speeches on the subject of oppression by Government, as well as by money-lenders, zamindars and other capitalists were made. About the end of November Spratt and Muzaffar Ahmad and the members of the Executive Committee of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, Bengal, elected Sohan Singh Josh of the Kirti Dal, Punjab, for the presidentship of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Conference, which was held at Calcutta in the last week of December.

### **Punjab Workers' & Peasants' Party Conference**

The second session of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of the Punjab, organised by the Kirti group of Amritsar, was held at Lyallpur along with the political conference. The Kirti Party had confidently announced that S. A. Dange of Bombay would preside over the conference and that Spratt, Bradley and other well-known communists would attend. No extra-provincial communist, however, of any importance attended and the Conference had to elect as President Chabil Das, a Lahore propagandist of Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha.

Ram Chandra, chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered his address, which was an objectionable discourse of Communism coupled with laudatory reference to revolutionism, and denunciation of imperialism, capitalism and the present system of society. It recommended the nationalization of wealth, a social revolution, the organization of Workers and Peasants to resist exploitation by capitalism, and contained specific suggestions for the assessment of land revenue on the principles of the Income-tax Act, the unrestricted Indianization of the Army and the withdrawal of the British Army from India. The Village Patrol Act, the Land revenue system and canal water rates were all attacked. Resolutions were passed appealing to the people not to take part in any future war, condemning the Trade Disputes Bill, congratulating the peasants of Bardoli on their successful organization and opposition to the Government. The Communist doctrines were proclaimed with more candour than on any previous public occasion, and anti-Government and anti-British propaganda was the predominating note.

### **United Provinces**

In the United Provinces two Workers' and Peasants' Parties were formed during October, 1928. One was styled "The Bundelkhand Workers' and Peasants' Party" with head-quarter at Jhansi and N.L. Kadam as its secretary, and the other "The U.P. Peasants' and Workers' Party" at Meerut, with P C. Joshi, an Allahabad student as its secretary. The Jhansi group held a Conference on 28th and 29th October, under the presidentship of Jhavwala of Bombay. The Meerut group also held a conference at Meerut. It was attended by Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmad, Kedar Nath Sahgal and others. At both places the speeches were extremely objectionable. At Meerut Spratt openly preached direct action. A new Communist organ "The Krantikari" was started from Jhansi under the editorship of the well-known revolutionary Krishna Gopal Sharma. The articles in Krantikari are openly communistic and its tone is always objectionable.



### **“Call to Action”**

A pamphlet entitled “A call to Action”, issued by the Bengal Workers’ and Peasants’ Party, came to notice in September, 1928. It clearly showed and avowed the revolutionary aim of the Party. The author is said to be Phillip Spratt. A few extracts given below will show the stuff the pamphlet contains :

“...The lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie, the unemployed, etc., a section of a non-cooperators, and the remnant of the terrorist parties are the informed left of the Congress and constitute part of the ground from which the Workers’ and Peasants’ parties are now rising..By means of strikes, demonstrations and hartals and the more laborious means of organisation and education, the class consciousness and solidarity of the masses will be raised to the level necessary before its task can be achieved.”

“The most important problem which the measses will have to solve is the agrarian question, the relation of the cultivators to the soil on which they work. No solution can be satisfactory unless the central question of the ownership of land is decided; against the reactionary system of the partition of land among a few big owners with arbitrary powers of expulsion and exploitation; for the principles of land to the cultivator himself..... The Party must also carry on propaganda in relation to international affairs. The League against imperialism must be supported, and its propaganda for the alliance of the revolutionary movements be assisted. Solidarity must be encouraged with the Russian and Chinese revolutions, particularly in view of the danger of war. And a definite campaign must be conducted against war, especially amongst the peasants who supply the soldiers, and among the workers who supply the meterials and transport. The slogan must be “ADVANCE OF NON-COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE WAR MACHINE IN THE EVENT OF WAR”.

### **Instructional Classes**

Phillip Spratt and Muzaffar Ahmad, in order to expand the principle of their party, arranged a small instructional class

in Bombay, to which C.G. Shah delivered a series of lectures on Russian Revolution, Imperialism, the class struggle etc. The Communist policy of educating the masses to "class consciousness" was also pursued by the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party.

### **Activity Amongst Transport Workers**

About the end of October, the Bengal Communists were endeavouring to gain a footing among the dock labourers in Calcutta. Under the auspices of Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party, a few meetings were held and addressed by Muzaffar Ahmad, Dharani Goswami and Shamsul Huda, a Moscow trained youth. They urged the necessity of forming a Dockers' Union to be called the Transport Workers' Union. Phillip Spratt was also active in this connection and paid visit to Kidderpore Docks. In November a Transport Workers' Union of Khalasis and Lascars of inland and sea-going vessels was organised.

### **Communism and the Youth Movement**

Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference, Poona, said : "We must aim at the destruction of all imperialism and reconstruction of society on another basis. That basis must be one of cooperation and that was another name for socialism. Our national ideal must therefore, be the establishment of a cooperative Socialist Commonwealth and our international idea a worlds federation of socialist States. The voice that claims freedom must be the voice of revolt. When the voice is raised England will bow to the inevitable".

At the instance of B. F. Bradley, labourers started Factory Committees in Bombay mills on the lines followed in Soviet Russia.

### **Connections with the League Against Imperialism**

The League Against Imperialism, with V. N. Chattopadhyaya as its secretary and Berlin its Head Quarter, has been

increasingly active in establishing connection with India. There is abundant evidence to prove that the League is a Communist organisation—contact between this organisation and Indian Revolutionaries and communists such as Jawaharlal, Dange and Jhavwala has been continually strengthened. A mass of correspondence and literature of an objectionable nature sent out from Berlin within the last three months leaves no doubt that it is working under the direct control of Moscow and is controlled by the Communist International. The League sent a number of letters and pamphlets to the Communist delegates at the Jharia Trade Union Conference, and at the same time forwarded to Bakhale a signed photograph of Com. Rykov, which showed beyond doubt the connection of the League Against Imperialism with Profintern.

In a letter dated November 7th, 1928, to Jhavwala, Chattopadhyaya wrote that the question of placing the necessary funds at Jhavwala's disposal for running an office was being considered and that he hoped to give him a reply in a week or two: and he asked Jhavwala and other comrades to work energetically this year to overcome all the objections to the affiliation of the AITUC to his League. He at the same time informed Jhavwala that the All-Russian Federation of Trade Unions had declared its formal affiliation to the League Against Imperialism. The typewriter on which these letters have been typed, and the paper and the envelopes, are very similar to those sent by notorious M. N. Roy, who is at present in Berlin. Expert opinion on this point is being sought.

On 18th August, 1928, the following resolution on India was passed by the League Against Imperialism : "The Executive Committee of the League Against Imperialism reaffirms, its determination to support the policy of complete national independence for India...And the League holds that the progress and development of the Workers and Peasants of India is impossible under foreign domination, and further that the British control of India is an insuperable obstacle to general disarmament and a standing menace to peace".

In a letter dated 3rd October, 1928, Jawaharlal wrote to Chattopadhyaya, secretary of the League Against Imperialism as follows :

“You have heard no doubt of the new Independence for India League. Very likely this will associate with you. It may also be a meeting ground for anti-imperialist activities, but so far it is in its infancy and requires organization....It would be a very good thing if you can send a representative to the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party of the Trade Union Congress at Jharia”.

### **Arrival of Agents from Abroad**

During the last three months the following agents of communism were sent out to India :

1. J. F. Ryan
2. J. W. Johnstone
3. H. L. Hutchinson
4. Shamsul Huda
5. Dr. Gangadhar Moreswar Adhikari

**J. F. RYAN :** Ryan is a member of the Communist Party of Australia and Chairman of New South Wales Trade and Labour Councils. He arrived in India in the 18th November 1928, having a world-wide visa, after attending the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat meeting in Shanghai. He is one of the signatories to an appeal of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat entitled “Help the Chinese workers! Protest Against the Treacherous Kuomintang and Against the white Terror”. This appeal was published in the “International Press Correspondence”, Vol.—, No. 17, dated 15th March 1928. In a letter dated 2nd November 1928, written from Bombay to a lady in Australia, Ryan informed the addressee that the Congress at Jharia had been postponed until about the 22nd of December; So he was actually a month too early and the only thing to do was to stay. This clearly showed that his visit to India was to attend the annual session of the AITUC. As he himself gave out at Jharia, he had come to secure the affiliation of AITUC to the Pan Pacific Trade Union

Secretariat. In the course of a speech at the session of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Conference Ryan urged the necessity of establishing the workers' swaraj in India and assured the Indian workers that the Pan-Pacific Federation would stand by them in all their efforts in overthrowing the capitalists, landlords and the chiefs who were part British imperialism.

**J. W. JOHNSTONE :** J. W. Johnstone was specially sent by the League Against Imperialism to attend the AITUC conference at Jharia, and from a telegram dated 10th December, 1928 sent by him to "ANCOLINA" Berlin (League Against Imperialism), it appears that he was specially deputed to obtain the application of the AITUC to the League. While at Calcutta he freely mixed with Spratt, Muzaffar Ahmad and other well-known communists.

On 12th December he received £ 105 sent to him from Berlin. He also received cables from the League Against Imperialism, directing him to attend the National Congress, Independence League and Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference as the League's delegate. In his speech he told the strikers at Calcutta that all workers under imperialistic powers were fighting against economic exploitation and the League Against Imperialism was ready to help any country in its struggle for freedom. At Bauria and at Ludlow Jute mills, which he visited, he advised the strikers to continue the strike. His presence was considered by Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, as dangerous, and he was arrested at Jharia after the first sitting of AITUC where he delivered a most objectionable speech, and deported under Act III of 1864. While at Calcutta he also addressed a meeting of the workers of the E. I. R. workers at Lilloah on 8th December. The meeting consisted of about 6,000 workers and was organised by Shibnath Banerji, Bimal Ganguly and others. Johnstone in the course of his speech, said that he knew that there was a movement on foot among the capitalists in England to open factories in India, as Indian labour was much cheaper. He would, therefore, like to warn the Indian labourers to guard against this movement by organising themselves

beforehand. As regards the Welfare Committee started by the railway authorities at Lilloah to look into the grievances of the workers, the speaker said that it was a bogus organisation brought into existence by the capitalists, not for the benefit of the labourers but for the benefit of themselves, as its real object was to dissuade them from joining their union. The speech was translated into vernacular by Shibnath Banerji.

In a cablegram to the Peasants' and Workers' conference at Calcutta, Chattopadhyaya protested against the arrest and deportation of Johnstone who was sent as a fraternal delegate to the several conferences in India.

**H. L. HUTCHINSON :** H. L. Hutchinson is a young journalist who is reported to be a communist. He has been in Bombay since 17th September, 1928. He was formerly in Berlin, where he was hand in glove with A. C. Nambiar, Chattopadhyaya's brother-in-law. Soon after his arrival in Bombay he got in touch with Bradley and other communists in Bombay, but he has not as yet displayed much activity. Hutchinson's mother, Mrs. Knight, is a member of the Communist Party in Manchester, he himself was not considered to be of much importance by the authorities in England.

**SHAMSUL HUDA :** Shamsul Huda, who was known in Moscow as Maqbul, returned from Europe and joined the Communist Party of Bengal. Ever since his arrival he has been working with Muzaffar Ahmad, Spratt and others. He was trained at the Eastern University of Moscow and he is said to have been sent to India by Soumendra Nath Tagore. He has been specially active in endeavouring to send youths to Moscow under the guise of ascaris by offering money to the Serangs of different ships.

**DR. ADHIKARI :** Dr. Gangadhar Moreshwar Adhikari was sent out to India by Nambiar and Chattopadhyaya. It was reported on 1st January, 1928 that Adhikari was a member of the German Communist Party. On his arrival in India his luggage was searched and a large number of communist books and literature was found on him, and also a letter from Jaggo, dated 4th December 1927, Bombay which showed that

Adhikari was an active Communist and that he had been circulating Communist Literature such as "Masses of India". He had been receiving from India regular reports about the Workers' and Peasants' Party activities in Bombay. Soon after his arrival in Bombay he left for Calcutta, and there met Dange, Joglekar, Spratt and Bradley.

USMANI, HABIB AHMED AND RAFIQ : About the end of May 1928, Shaukat Usmani, Habib Ahmed and Shafiq left India surreptitiously, and on 27th September 1928 London reported that Shaukat Usmani, Muhammed Shafiq and Habib Ahmed, S.N.Tagore, C. P. Dutt were Indian delegates to the World Congress at Moscow, where Shaukat is reported to have made very objectionable speeches. It may be noted that in the last week a December Shaukat Usmani suddenly disappeared in Calcutta and took part in the deliberations of the Workers' and Peasants' Party there. Another man known to be A. B. Khardikar of Nasik, who was sent to London by Bradley, was reported to have left for Moscow in September 1928 in accordance with the arrangements made with Comintern by C. P. Dutt. He has gone there to study in the Lenin Institute.

### **Jharia Congress of the AITUC**

The AITUC Congress was held at Jharia from the 17th December onward. It was attended amongst others by Johnstone and Ryan, delegates from the League against Imperialism and Pan Pacific T. U. Secretariat respectively. One of the resolutions declared the aim of T. U. C. to be the converting of India into a Socialist Republic of the workers. It was also resolved to send 50 delegates to the All-Parties Conference with definite instructions to place the following demands before the conference :

1. Nationalisation of land and industry
2. Universal adult suffrage
3. Right to go on strike
4. The Constitution to be based on the principles of a socialist Republic of working classes and the abolition of the States and landlords.

Another resolution empowered the TUC to apply for affiliation with the League Against Imperialism, Berlin. D. R. Thengdi and Jaglekar were nominated to attend the Paris Session of the League Against Imperialism to be held in July 1929. It may be seen from the election of the office-bearers that there is a strong leaven of Communists in the Executive of this organization. Among the office-bearers, Jawahar Lal Nehru has been elected President, D. B. Kulkarni, Bhupendra Nath Dutta, Muzaffar Ahmad and Sethi as Vice-Presidents, while S. A. Dange has become one of the Assistant Secretaries with Bakhale. Another significant resolution was the calling of an Asiatic Labour Congress to be held at Bombay at an early date. Other resolutions condemned the Trades Bill and directed one day's general strike as a protest; and in case the bill was passed a general strike throughout India was resolved upon. A committee of Spratt, Sethi and P. C. Bose was appointed to study labour conditions and the condition of the Workers and Peasants in Bihar. Besides the foreign delegates Messrs Bradley, Spratt and Kirk were the other Europeans who attended the Conference. Among Indians were Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Dewan Chamanlal, Aswale, Dr. B. N. Dutta, M.K. Bose, Kishore Lal Ghosh, Aftab Ali, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shamsuddin Ahmad, S. C. Bhattacharji, Miss Das Gupta, Giri, Joshi, Bakhale and Pillay. Messages of sympathy from the National Minority Movement in Great Britain, Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, British Trade Union Congress, Irish Labour Party, League Against Imperialism, and from the Union of Soviet Russia were received. Johnstone and Ryan made long speeches explaining the objectives of their respective Institutions and urging the AITUC to affiliate with them. Both the speeches were well received by the audience.

The decision taken last year to appoint the General Council of the British T.U.C. as the AITUC representative was rescinded. A telegram was received by the President of the AITUC Jharia, from Berlin, sent by the League Against Imperialism. In the course of this telegram the signatories among whom were made Madame Sun-Yat-Sen, Saklatvala,



Baldwin, Scott Nearing, Barbusee and other Communists, said : "Latest events, specially the Simon Commission, show enormous importance of Indian working class struggle against Imperialism. At the end economic, political struggle of Indian workers was underlying factor of anti-Imperialist attitude of Indian National Congress. Despite different European labour leaders' attempts to combat League, influential European, South African, Latin American Trade Unions are affiliating. On behalf of affiliated Trade Unions League declare fullest sympathy with the Indian workers and invites heartily AITUC to participate anti-imperialist world Congress July 1929 and affiliate to League". Fraternal greetings were also received from Moscow, USSR. At the end of the session Joglekar in thanking the Presidium said that he hoped that the next year's Congress to be held at Nagpur would turn out "considerably red".

### **All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference**

The new formed Workers' and Peasants' Party in the foundation of which Phillip Spratt played the chief part, met in Calcutta from 21st to 24th December, 1928. A good deal of propaganda had been carried on for months before and D.K. Goswami, in a notice re : the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Conference, said the Party believed in the development of militant labour and peasant movement for the improvement of the economic and political position of the masses and for the attainment of complete independence and held that this movement must cooperate, but on an independent basis, with the general political movement. (Another leaflet, issued on behalf of the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party, contained the following paragraph : "What you had is being drained away and you are suffering miseries at the hands of the zamindars. For fear of them you cannot speak anything against them. The zamindars are enjoying the harvest of your labour. The zamindars never do any work, but still they are wallowing in luxury, but you cannot appease your hunger even twice daily. They are taking away everything, but you are dying of

hunger and living in dingy places where air and light cannot penetrate. You are sweating in summer and shivering in winter. If any of your children fall ill you cannot provide them with medicine and your darlings die before your eyes and you cannot do anything...If you combine and want to free yourself from this serfdom you will be driven to death owing to the oppression of the zamindars. The Workers' and Peasants' Party stands for the poor and those distressed by the oppressions of the capitalists and the zamindars...The administration of Hindustan is in the hands of foreign capitalists. The foreign government is endeavouring to amass fortunes of this country by looting and also by trying to establish themselves more firmly in this country. It should be the aim of this party to neutralise the effect of the capitalist oppression by establishing self-governments'').

Attempts were made to affiliate the party to the League Against Imperialism, but owing to certain opposition the question was left pending. At a sitting of the Conference on 23rd December, the necessity of a Central Organisation affiliated to the League Against Imperialism was urged by Muzaffar Ahmad and Spratt, and it was decided ultimately to form an All India Central Organisation for the Workers' and Peasants' Party consisting of 16 executive members, 4 each from Bombay, Calcutta, Punjab and U.P., with one General Secretary and a Cashier.

It was also decided to form 3 groups namely Peasant, Trade Union, and Education. The following were elected members of the Central Executive organisation.

**BOMBAY :** S. V. Ghatge

Nimbkar

Dange

Joglekar

**BENGAL :** P. Spratt

Dharani Goswami

Muzaffar Ahmad

Hemanta Kumar Sarkar

**PUNJAB** : Sohan Singh Josh  
Bhag Singh Canadian  
Ferozdin Mansoor  
Ramprosad or  
Kedar Nath Saigal

**U. P.** : Lachmi Narain  
Dr. Vishnu Nath Mukherji  
P. C. Joshi  
Gauri Shankar

“Down with Imperilaism”, “Land for the Peasants and Bread for the Workers”, “Long live the Soviet Revolution” etc. have been dinned into their ears. In their processions they now carry red flags bearing Communist devices, and the spirit of violence has manifested itself on frequent occassions. The indenogenous Communist leaders, by their reckless advocacy of Lenin’s doctrines, have brought into being forces which they can no longer control. In a few instances, the workers have taken the law into their own hands and have mercilessly assaulted fellow workers whose activities did not meet with their approval. Conflicts with the police and frenzied attacks on properly have been features of the situation, which are symptomatic of the grave unrest brought about by a handful of local communist agitators. The dire results of their activities will be viewed with gratification by Head Quarters in Moscow, for everything has worked according to Plan.

The creation of unrest, as a preliminary to the “workers’ revolution” has been the avowed policy of the Communist International not only in India, but in every other country where they have attempted to gain a footing.

The contact between the Indian labour movement and foreign communist organizations has considerably increased. It is well-known that Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat is communist in inspiration and has received strong support from Head Quarters in Moscow. The Soviet leaders have frequently expressed the desire that the All India Trade Union Congress should affiliate with the Secretariat. In

pursuance of this object, John Francis Ryan was despatched from Sydney in the guise of a tourist. He attended the Jharia Congress and did not attempt to conceal the object of his mission.

Through another important auxiliary organisation of the Comintern, the League Against Imperialism, Moscow is striving to penetrate the Indian T. U. movement. The arrangements to send delegate of the League to attend the Jharia Congress were planned in careful and elaborate detail. When the scheme to sound A. J. Cook or some other British communist as the League's delegate was frustrated, J. W. Johnstone, who but recently attended the Moscow World Congress, was despatched to India, also in the guise of a tourist.

Ever since the beginning of the Communist conspiracy, the importance of securing personal contact with promising Indian recruits has been emphasised, time after time by M.N. Roy and other communist leaders abroad. Moscow was especially anxious that the representatives from India should attend the World Congress, and it is now certain that Shaukat Usmani, Habib Ahmad and Shafiq were all present there under various aliases, and delivered speeches before the Congress. Usmani has since returned in order to continue his work amongst the labourers. Shamsul Huda, another trained communist, immediately on his return to Calcutta, got into contact with Spratt and all the other local leaders, and began active work among the mill employees. It will be seen therefore that in spite of all precautions to prevent the departure from, or ingress into India of those Communist agents, some of them, still succeeded in evading surveillance and in accomplishing the mission for which Moscow has trained them.

The rapidly growing influence of the Communists was reflected in the proceedings of the recent session of the All-India National Congress at Calcutta. More than in any other previous congress, the Calcutta gathering showed that it was anxious to placate the labour extremists. Resolutions condemning the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill

were passed, and it was decided that the Congress should take up the organization of the workers and peasants as parts of its future programme of constructive work for non-cooperation. Some communists have secured places in the AICC. Similarly the communist group in Bombay were remarkably successful in the municipal elections; and in other public bodies throughout the country they are gradually gaining a footing. While the Congress was sitting a huge demonstration of some 30,000 labourers marched in procession with red banners and took possession of the Congress pandal in spite of the protest of the Congress leaders. The labourers held a demonstration for over an hour and were finally induced to evacuate the pandal. The fact that such an incident could have happened is an indication of the enormous increase in the influence and powers of organization of the workers.

After the comparative failure of M. N. Roy's organisation to achieve any tangible results in India, the success of the new methods (delegation of Allison, Spratt, Bradley, Johnstone, Ryan etc.) with the consequent upheaval in industrial circles in India, is bound to encourage the Soviet leaders to still further efforts. The menace of communism to the peace in India is looming larger than ever, and unless the authorities are armed with wider powers to deal with the leaders of the movement in this country (especially those imported from outside), the events of the next year or two may well be fraught with the greatest consequences of the security of the country.

SUBJECT : PRIVATE AND PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN  
H. E. VICEROY AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE PRIVATE :

Copy of a letter from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, Dated 24th May, 1928.

I read with great interest your letter of 3rd May and enclosures re : the activity of Communists in India, and I am grateful for the information and suggestions which you forwarded. Your diagnosis of the situation is, I think, substantially the same as ours, that is to say, that these motives are still in their infancy and may not be a serious menace in

India for some little time, nevertheless they contain great potentialities of danger, and are bound therefore to see what steps can be taken to discourage them while they are weak and prevent anything in the nature of a rapid growth. I am in full agreement with you that the line of proscribing such movements does not hold out much hope of success and that we must consider rather what we can do in the way preventing the Indian movement, which by itself is very weak, from receiving an impetus from outside either in the form of money or what is still more important, of brains and organising capacity. I was already in consultation with the Home Department, thinking along these lines, before I received your letter. With regard to the first point namely the keeping out of foreign remittance, a draft Ordinance has been prepared (which I shall be discussing tomorrow with my Council) with the object of enabling us to take immediate action should we hear of the remittance of any substantial sum of money. Present indications do not suggest that any such action is likely to be necessary. A comparatively small sum has been sent for the Bombay strike, and another for the East Indian Railway Strike. Both these remittances are in the nature of "tokens of fraternal solidarity", and it is possible that Moscow is not prepared at the moment to proceed further; but we must be ready for possible eventualities. As this method of proceeding by ordinance is not satisfactory, we shall also consider whether we should introduce in the coming Simla session a regular Bill designed to deal with such foreign remittances in a more comprehensive way.

With regard to the second point, namely preventing the movement being stimulated by British foreign workers, I was considering whether powers could be taken to deport British subjects, as we now deport foreigners. This is the main additional power which you also suggest in your letter, might be taken. The particular form of achieving this object, which you suggest in the draft Bill forwarded with your letter will require and receive very careful and prompt attention, and we come to the conclusion that legislation to secure these additional

powers is desirable, I am disposed to agree, subject to the views of my Council, that we must consider its introduction in the Simla session. As soon as we have reached provisional conclusions, I think I shall have to put them secretly to Governors, in as much as if we get the legislation in question, we may have to rely largely on local governments for carrying it into effect. You mention the case of Allison. I understand it is not likely there will be any difficulty about deporting him at the end of his sentence. The matter is not being overlooked.

I think it is important to bear in the mind that we require not only to prevent access of communists from outside, but to prevent Indians going abroad and receiving communist training which may convert them into "formidable" agents on their return. This check we endeavour to exercise at present through passport system, and indeed I do not at the moment see in what other way this danger could be dealt with. We must in some form or other retain the power to prevent Indians from going abroad, if we have no power, as I think we cannot have, to prevent their returning.

### **Governor of Bombay to Viceroy**

Telegram P., Ganeskhind, 9th August, 1928

Secretary Home Department wrote yesterday to Haig sending him a copy of a letter received from the Commissioner of Police, Bombay re : communists in Bombay. The matter is very urgent. I sincerely trust Government of India will be able to take action at once particularly in view of serious position of mill strikes and activities which communists are now showing to ally themselves with political attacks on Government.

### **Viceroy to Governor of Bombay**

Telegram P., 13th August, 1928

Private & Personal No. 565-5 Communists

Reference your telegram of 9th August. I have seen the letter Commissioner of Police, and I fully recognise that you have an anxious situation to meet. We desire to do everything

reasonably possible to assist you. But the main proposal of your government is that the Government of India should take all-India action, which means introducing legislation that will apply to all provinces. You will understand that this, particularly in a matter of such extreme complexity as the measures that can effectively and reasonably be taken against Communists, involves the consultations of all local governments. We are taking steps to put the whole situation before them and to get their opinions. I hope your letters to local governments will issue within the next day or two. You recognise fully the difficulties of government action against Communists who are engaged in labour disputes and the danger that the Government may be led into measures which seem to be not merely anti-Communist but anti-labour. These considerations which lie at the root of the problem apply with ever greater force to action by Government of India than to action by your government, especially when the Government of India are just introducing important labour legislation. You will understand that it must take some time to consult the local Governments and to consider their views. I fear, therefore, you will have to face your immediate position with the resources of the ordinary law supplemented by the powers under the Bombay Regulation XXV if a real emergency arises. The conditions for the use of such emergency powers are stated in paragraph 3 of our official telegram of 2nd August, No. 196-C.

2. Isenmonger leaves for Bombay tomorrow, and I trust you will find him useful in discussing the details of the situation. He will also be able to bring back to us a first-hand impression of the situation as your police view it.

### **Viceroy to Secretary of State**

Telegram P, 21st December, 1928

*Private & Personal.* No. 410-C. Reference your private and persinal telegram No. 3897 of December 19th, I am very glad to be in possession of your views. My own mind has been moving rather in the same direction, and I will have the matter



examined from the point of view you have put. I shall expect your further considered opinion on the advice of your experts as soon as possible.

### **Secretary of State to Viceroy**

Telegram P., 19th December, 1928 (Received 20th)

I have sent to your Home Department on December 7th an official telegram replying to certain questions about the Public Safety Bill and the possibility of using Regulation III against Europeans if necessary. I am quite clear that it would be most undesirable, even if it is actually legal, to use this Regulation against European British subjects, and I am actually clear that it is important to get the Bill passed at the earliest opportunity by use of your power of certification if necessary, though I doubt whether it would be practicable to deport persons who had been unsuccessfully prosecuted.

But the powers that the Public Safety Bill will give, though they will cover the existing loophole through which European British subjects slip are not operative against Indian subjects, and even when it is passed, we shall have no means of dealing summarily with Indian Communists except Regulation III, the use of which excites comment sooner or later. All informations that the activities of the Indian Communists whether or not they openly describe themselves as such are rapidly on the increase and I am considering whether the time has not now come to take power to deal drastically with the Communist agitation and propaganda comprehensively. After the Fiasco of Spratt's trial I think it is most unwise to rely for this purpose on a successful prosecution of any Communist, Indian or British before a Jury. Moreover, trials of the kind you are now contemplating are spun out endlessly, e.g., the Cawnpore Conspiracy trial and mischief is going on all the time. What I have in mind is that all bodies which advocate communist doctrines or have communistic connections whether in India or outside it should be proclaimed to be illegal and membership of them punishable. I am getting my expert advisers to examine views as soon as possible. In the meantime perhaps

you would turn this suggestion over in your mind. The information which is being collected in connection with the proposed conspiracy trials will probably throw some light on its practicability. I appreciate the difficulties and realise that such action would cause an outcry as being an attempt to stifle freedom of opinion, but a line of criticism which is tenable in the west is not necessarily applicable in very different conditions of India.

SECRET

18th January, 1929

My dear Sykes,

Since my return to Delhi we have been considering our policy in regard to communists. We have decided subject to the concurrence of the Secretary of State, which I think may be assumed, to reintroduce the Public Safety Bill at the beginning of the coming session, and to include in it provisions for forfeiture or control of funds remitted to India from abroad for communistic purpose. We recognise that this measure, though important in itself, particularly as putting a stop for the future to the marked impetus the Communist movement has received recently from abroad, does not directly touch the existing Indian Communist agitators. We have, however, at present reasonable good hopes of being able to run a comprehensive conspiracy case against these men. If we could do this, it would in our opinion deal a more severe blow to the Indian Communist movement than anything that could be effected through further special legislation, and this is in fact substantially in accordance with the policy of our government recommended in its official letter No. S. D. 1038, dated 10th September, 1928.

The conspiracy case, however, could hardly be started till early in April, and in the meantime you may be going through a difficult period in Bombay. I hear from Rainey, as had gathered also from the papers, that commercial opinion in Bombay is much upset at the present disturbed conditions of labour and that they are inclined to press for drastic action. No doubt they tend to take an exaggerated view of the

situation, when their own pockets are threatened, and to form unreasonable expectations and make unreasonable demands from Government, and certainly we are not in favour of dealing with the situation by taking new powers (apart from the Public Safety Bill) until it is quite clear that the existing law is inadequate. At the same time I suppose it is the case that there is a good deal of intimidation prevalent in Bombay with occasional instances of violence and murder. I know the difficulties the police have to encounter in dealing with activities so widespread, and I am confident your government have been giving the whole situation the most careful attention. Perhaps you would let me know whether you think anything more could be done to try and enforce respect for the ordinary law. I suppose this involves on the one hand having an ample police force available, wherever intimidation is likely to be attempted, and on the other hand the ability to secure convictions in the case of flagrant breaches of the law. I do not know whether your police force is sufficient for this task, or if not, whether it would be possible to make any temporary addition to it. Prosecution no doubt present difficulties. But so far as these are based on the attitude of juries it seems probable that a Bombay jury would now be much less sympathetic towards the activities of Communists than it would have been a year ago.

I shall much look forward to the opportunity of discussing these things with you when you come here. It might be helpful, if you could manage it, for you to bring your Home Member up with you, so that he could talk at the same time to our people here. If you think this would be useful, we shall be delighted to put him up at the same time.

Yours Sincerely  
Sd/- Irwin

His Excellency,  
The Right Hon'ble

Sir Fredrick Sykes, G. C. I. E., C.B.E., K.C.B., C.M.G.  
Governor of Bombay.

SECRET

18th January, 1929.

My dear Stanley,

Since my return to Delhi, we have been considering our policy in respect to communists. We have decided subject to the concurrence of the Secretary of State which I think may be assumed, to re-introduce the Public Safety Bill at the beginning of the coming session, and to include in it provisions for the forfeiture of control of funds remitted to India from abroad for communistic purposes. We recognise that this measure, though important in itself, particularly as putting a stop for the future to the marked impetus the communist movement has received recently from abroad, does not directly touch the existing Indian communist agitators. We have, however, at present reasonably good hopes of being able to run a comprehensive conspiracy case against these men. If we could do this, it would in our opinion deal a more severe blow to the Indian communist movement than anything that could be effected through further special legislation, and we are not in favour at present of taking any new powers (apart from the Public Safety Bill).

The conspiracy case, however, could hardly be started till early in April, and in the meantime you must be going through a difficult period in Calcutta. The foundation of policy must be to enforce respect for the ordinary law. Intimidation of course, as experience have shown, is not always easy to deal with and I know the difficulties the police have to encounter when faced by widespread activities of this kind. Perhaps you would let me know whether you think in this respect the situation in Calcutta is satisfactory, or whether it is necessary or possible to do anything more to uphold the ordinary law. I suppose what is required is on the one hand to have an ample police force available wherever intimidation is likely to be attempted, and on the other hand to be able to secure convictions with promptitude in the case of flagrant breaches of the law. Rainey mentioned to me a case in connection with the Fort Gloster Mills, which seems to have given rise to a good deal of public uneasiness and indeed bewilderment.

You will remember I did speak to you about this when I was in Calcutta. I understand that one of the principal agitators, who has been promoting the strike, has been three times convicted of aggravated assaults on mill employees. In each case the agitator has been released on bail within two days of his conviction, in each case the appeal has been heard by the Session Judge, and in case, although it appears that one of these appeals is more than 3 months old, judgement has not been delivered. I know the courts in Bengal tend to be weaker or more technical than elsewhere, but one would have supposed that there must be some means of preventing developments of this kind, which would appear to be not so much weakness, as to sheer neglect of duty and inefficiency. I should be glad to know whether you have found yourself able to take any action about this, for if once the law is believed to be impotent in such cases, dangerous developments of these kinds must be expected.

Yours ever,  
(S. Irwin)

His Excellency,  
The Rt. Hon'ble  
Sir Stanley Jackson. P.C., G.C.I.E.  
Governor of Bengal.



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